

PC Accelerator

bigger, better, faster games

FROM THE MAKERS OF
PC GAMER
A FRESH LOOK AT GAMES

WORLD EXCLUSIVE

DIABLO

WE WENT TO THE **DEPTHS OF HELL**
AND ALL WE BROUGHT BACK WAS
THIS **LOUSY FEATURE!**

PACKED WITH:

- ❖ Exclusive screenshots
- ❖ New character classes
- ❖ And a devilish bevy of babes

BUILD THE BEAST

IF WE CAN MAKE A MONSTER PC, SO CAN YOU

Voodoo Magic

THE VOODOO 3 KICKS
LARGE AMOUNTS OF ASS,
OR DOES IT?

Everquest

WE LOGGED OVER
500 HOURS, LEARN
FROM OUR MISTAKES!

NAKED EDITION

Want The Disc?
Look for the Double Disc
Edition wherever
PC ACCELERATOR is sold

ISSUE NUMBER **10**

JUNE 1999

imagine
MEDIA WITH PASSION

\$4.99US \$5.99CAN





***THERE IS A
NEW FORCE
IN THE GALAXY.
A BRILLIANT ALLIANCE...***



A promotional poster for Eidos Interactive. The background is a dark, starry space. On the left, Lara Croft, a woman with brown hair and glasses, wearing a green tank top and black pants, holds a silver handgun. In the center, Hiro Miyamoto, a man with dark hair and a beard, wears a large, dark, metallic, scale-like armor. On the right, a blue, clawed hand reaches out. The text 'LARA CROFT' and 'TOMB RAIDER' is on the left, 'HIRO MIYAMOTO' and 'DAIKATANA' is in the center, and 'EIDOS INTERACTIVE' and 'WWW.EIDOSINTERACTIVE.COM' are at the bottom.

HIRO MIYAMOTO
DAIKATANA

LARA CROFT
TOMB RAIDER

Games with character.

EIDOS
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LOCKE D'AYERAM
REVENANT

DARC'I
URBAN CHAOS

RAZIEL
LEGACY OF KAIN:
SOUL REAVER

Powered by 3dfx.



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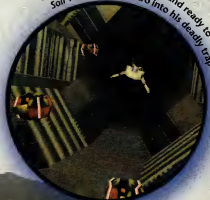
foolbar hits the afterburner to chase down prod as he tries to escape.



Multiplayer Tip #1

Don't deplete your afterburners cruising around. You'll need them when someone locks on a homer, or when you're trying to catch that guy in front of you. Keep it at 50% or more for that burst when you REALLY need it.

With his Gunboys positioned and ready to attack, Solr Flare lures Maestro into his deadly trap.



big Red receives a warm welcome to the world of D3 anarchy

While Specimen burns, Boma switches to Vuust to finish him off. Napalm, the gift that keeps on giving.



ACTUAL AUTOMAP - POLARIS

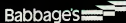
A favorite camper-hunting spot. Sick One catches one off-guard with a homer.



Multiplayer Tip #2

Use napalm to herd players into traps. Players have a tendency to back off from napalm bursts (with good reason). Herd them into a wall or corner and launch a frag missile into the wall next to them. The result is quick death for your opponent.

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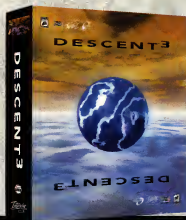
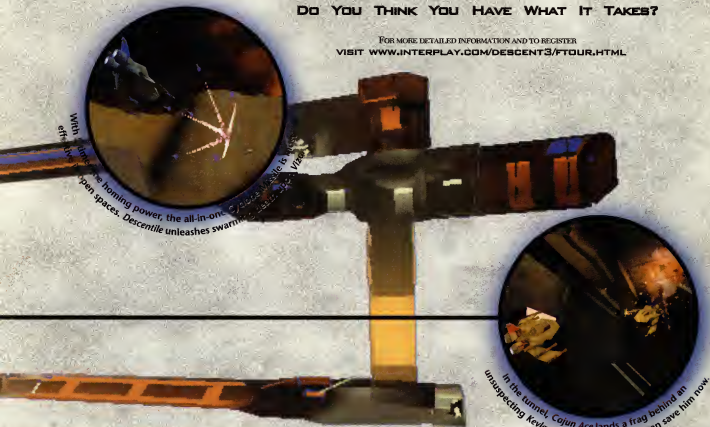
DESCENT 3

\$50,000 CHAMPIONSHIP

BACK IN 1995, DESCENT SET THE STANDARD FOR MULTIPLAYER GAMING. IT WAS THE FIRST GAME OF ITS KIND TO ALLOW MORE THAN 4 PLAYERS TO BATTLE ONLINE IN 360° 3D DEATHMATCHES. CONTINUING THE TRADITION, DESCENT 3'S MULTIPLAYER ACTION TAKES THE EXPERIENCE TO A NEW LEVEL. FOR THE LAUNCH OF DESCENT 3, WE ARE LOOKING FOR THE WORLD'S BEST DESCENT PILOT. WITH A GRAND PRIZE OF \$50,000 CASH AND THE ULTIMATE GAMING PC FROM GATEWAY™.

DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER
VISIT WWW.INTERPLAY.COM/DESCENT3/FTOUR.HTML



Multiplayer Tip #3

Use Vauss as much as possible in outdoor battles so you can keep a good distance from your opponent. Use Napalm indoors whenever possible and use super lasers against opponents in small tunnels since the lasers are harder to avoid.



**SO WHAT IF YOU
KILL YOUR FRIENDS**

WITH \$50,000,
YOU CAN BUY SOME NEW ONES.



SoftwareForPCs.com

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TO FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN WIN \$50,000 DESCENT NOW TO
www.interplay.com/descent3/ftour.html

Go to <http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411>; Product Number 93

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PCXL celebrates the Second Coming of one of the most popular action/RPG games of all time. An exclusive look at an unholy franchise that may make you shout at the devil. But you'll still respect yourself in the morning

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Everquest — possibly the closest you will ever come to joining a cult. PCXL shares some tips on how to make your virtual life more exciting than your real one



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Our grimy brain-drippings, cleaned up and slapped on the page. PCs vs Consoles — who comes out on top (and Jennifer vs Drew — same question), the 25 least important people in the industry, fun with dead celebrities, Hector's last stand, and a whole lot more



ON THE COVER

Diablo II (and we do mean two — go ahead and take another look. We'll wait.) We're not sure why she's staring at her spear like that, but it made the entire editorial staff cross our legs and wince in pain. The alternative was a nude pic of a *Diablo II* Sorceress, but the threat of an exposed-nipple backlash from newsstands squashed that decision. They just don't understand art

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The evil Kane returns to enslave you with hours of addictive gameplay



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In space, nobody can hear you cry "ass"



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A game that gave our reviewer Turret Syndrome (sorry about that)



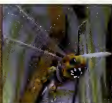
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Why can't post-apocalyptic futures be cheerful?



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So addictive, we've dubbed it "Eversmack"



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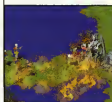
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Did we endure 11 seasons of "M*A*S*H" for nothing?



88 WAGES OF SIN

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RTS = Ridiculously Terrible Shit



92 MACHINES

Say, what does this button do? Aaaaiieeeee!



DEAD CELEBRITIES ACROSS AMERICA



CELEBRITY APPEARANCES

John Denver (Rocky Mountain Dead), Linda Carter (Yos Hottie), Burt Reynolds (Yos Stud), Jimmy Stewart (It's a Wonderful Death), Sissy Spacek (Coal Miner Chick), Phil Hartman (Unfrozen Caveman Corpses), Jodie Foster (Hot Girl Contact), George Burns (God meets God), Strom Thurmond (Close to God), Jennifer Love Hewitt (Created by God), Michael York (Needs the Publicity), James Earl Jones (Needs the Paycheck), Malcolm McDowell (Fantasy Revoked), Natalie Portman (Nearly Legal), Princess Diana (Nearly Regal), Chris Farley (Nearly a Ton, all dead weight), Sonny Bono (I Got tree, Babe), and our ongoing tribute to Drew Barrymore

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Our head honcho waxes philosophic (but not his legs) on the cultural significance of "Diff'rent Strokes." What do they have to do with "different folks?" The answers may surprise you

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Everquest — Enjoyable online diversion or cancerous festering petulance disguised as a rat-killing sim? Our editors make up your mind for you

THE DISCS

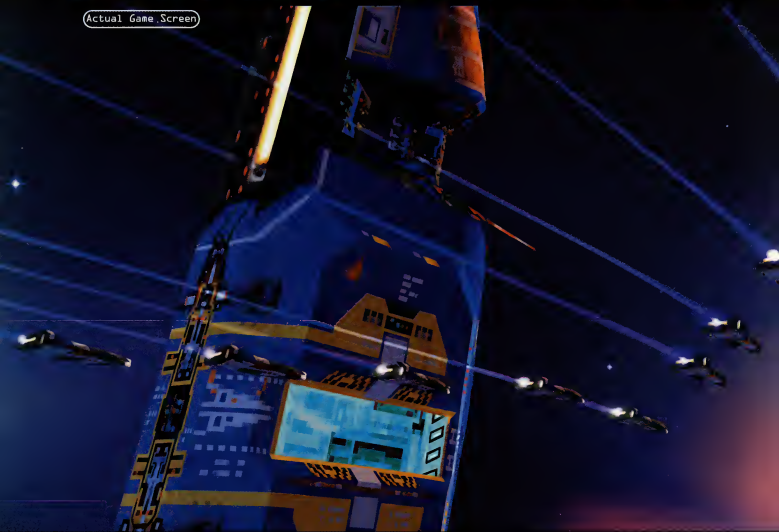


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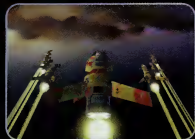
We beseech our U.S. and Canadian readers to end their blood feud and get along. That's why famous (or semi-famous) Canucks, Men Without Hats, sing of their love for our jam-packed double CD set

HOMEWORLD®

(Actual Game Screen)



Game of the Show E3 1998 -CGW



Choose unit types, fleet formations and flight tactics to create the best combat group for each tactical situation.



An advanced research tree lets you construct 54 ships between two distinct races, from lightly armored fighter-class interceptors to gigantic carriers that can build and transport up to 250 ships into battle.



Detailed weapon systems - including mass drivers, guided missiles, ion cannons and mines - operate automatically to track multiple or single targets.

Find detailed gameplay and ship specifications at www.homeworld.net

LOCATION: The Great Wasteland.

DESTINATION: Galactic Core.

WARNING:

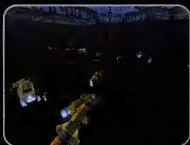
Enemy Taiidan strike force sighted.
+ Mothership under attack

Taiidan Carrier with Missile
Destroyer and Assault Frigate Fleet
nearing striking distance.

Dispatching Kueran Scout Squadron
to Delta Formation.

Time to intercept.

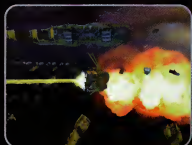
Winner of UGO's Best Real-Time Strategy Game of E3



Command the smallest
scout ship or
your entire armada in
an unrestricted 3D
world for pinpoint
control.



Explore super-detailed
galactic regions, from
asteroid fields to
nebulae to dust clouds.



Lead your Armada through
16 single-player
missions, or play against
seven opponents over
the Internet or LAN in
multiplayer scenarios.
A robust mission
editor lets you create
your own maps for
online campaigns.

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RP
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TEEN
PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED

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EDITOR'S LETTER

REVENGE OF THE EVER-NERDS

As the classic sitcom theme song says, "It takes different strokes to rule the world." The diverse staff at PCXL is what makes the magazine what it is (whether that be good or bad is ultimately your call). We've got geeks, Brits, Koreans, Texans, Hippies, jocks, and even babes. Not everyone on staff plays the same games or enjoys the same babes, and trying to decide on a lunch venue often results in fistcuffs. This means we don't always agree on games, and unlike some magazines, we aren't afraid to say it. Why? Because the diversity of opinions reflects the same variation among our readers. No two people are alike, and it stands to reason that not everyone will have the same view of a game's worth. Each review score is debated by the staff and the final verdict represents a scientific process too detailed to explain here. I think *Everquest* sucks, but Rob and Ed think it's great (although I must report that I too am hooked – damn Evers-mack!). We gave the game a well-deserved 9, but we also debate its merits and flaws.

This diversity allows us to make fun of everybody, including ourselves. As much as we portray ourselves to be macho, manly, and cool, one sad fact remains: We are game geeks

at heart. Gamers with a job that rewards us for being geeks, but geeks nonetheless.

But that's okay, because "different strokes rule the world."

MIKE SALMON, Editor in Chief

THE TEAM

EDITOR IN CHIEF

MIKE SALMON



EMAIL → mike@pcxl.com
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GEEKIEST MOMENT → "Actually playing *Everquest* for nine hours straight. And I don't even like the damn game!"
FAVORITE HECTOR MEMORY → "Where do I start? The women, the parties... Hector and I were like brothers!"
NOW PLAYING → Tribes, Quake II, High Heat Baseball, Quake, Quake II, and *Everquest* (Steven R)

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

ROB SMITH



EMAIL → rob@pcxl.com
NERD-A-LIKE → Gilbert Lowe
GEEKIEST MOMENT → "Launching *Futari Roleplayer*, a magazine devoted to pen and paper... uh... geeks!"
FAVORITE HECTOR MEMORY → "The time Hector actually beat me in *Quake II*. I still claim glare was to blame!"
NOW PLAYING → *Everquest*, *High Heat Baseball*, Quake, Quake II, and eagerly awaiting *Championship Manager 3*

NAMING EDITOR

PHILIP MAYARD



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NERD-A-LIKE → Lunar Latrell
GEEKIEST MOMENT → "Assuming a Barry Manilow concert, and singing along all night with Hector and John Romero at 'Cha Cha Cha: What a party'"
FAVORITE HECTOR MEMORY → "Partying all night with Hector and John Romero at 'Cha Cha Cha: What a party'"
NOW PLAYING → 3D Ultra Pinball, *Final Fantasy*, *Transistor*, *Run's Bitchin'*, *Edit*, *Or Mike's Over Sexual References*, and *Mike Eric Photoshop Nipples Out*

SENIOR EDITOR

DAN EGGER



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NERD-A-LIKE → Brian Tuck
GEEKIEST MOMENT → "Approximately 97% of my life, after all even I occasionally have cool dreams (aren't they)?"
FAVORITE HECTOR MEMORY → "The time I actually beat Hector in *Quake II*. Don't know how that happened!"
NOW PLAYING → *Team Fortress Classic*, *Everquest*, *Tribes*, *Extreme Builder* (just can't believe a game is really that bad)

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

ED LEE



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NERD-A-LIKE → "Jabari"
GEEKIEST MOMENT → "Buying so many issues of *X-Men* and never reading even one of the damn things!"
FAVORITE HECTOR MEMORY → "The time he volunteered to take one for the team and sit in on one of those boring Powermatt meetings!"
NOW PLAYING → *Everquest*, *K-Wing Alliance*, *Team Fortress Classic*, *Tribes*

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NERD-A-LIKE → "Jango"
GEEKIEST MOMENT → "I 'accidentally' went to a Star Wars convention where I got to meet Greedo!"
FAVORITE HECTOR MEMORY → "The sudden realization that Hector, a frisking cool cat, gets more mail than me. That, and finding his tiny wooden corpse!"
NOW PLAYING → *Rulebreakers*, *Tycoon*, *Team Fortress Classic*, *Lords of Lore II*

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NERD-A-LIKE → "Jango"
GEEKIEST MOMENT → "Working with these losers on a daily basis has exposed me to amazing levels of geekiness!"
FAVORITE HECTOR MEMORY → "I came in late one night and mistook Hector for Mike. And as they say, 'Once you have rock, you never go back'"
NOW PLAYING → With the brains, minds, and egos of our perverted readers

ART DIRECTOR

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EMAIL → kyle@pcxl.com
NERD-A-LIKE → "Ponderosa"
GEEKIEST MOMENT → "In the high school cafeteria playing *AD&D* with a bunch of like-minded... uh... geeks!"
FAVORITE HECTOR MEMORY → "Plastic breakfasts – just can't get enough!"
NOW PLAYING → *Tribes*, *Quake II*, *Team Fortress Classic*, apparently the games of choice among the art types

ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR

ERIC SMITH



EMAIL → eric@pcxl.com
NERD-A-LIKE → "Jango"
GEEKIEST MOMENT → "Eric is still unable to come to grips with his geekhood. We hope it's eternal!"
FAVORITE HECTOR MEMORY → "Sadly, I never really got to know him that well!"
NOW PLAYING → *Tribes*, *Team Fortress Classic*, *Half-Life*, and refusing to play *Everquest* (so far)

PC Accelerator
 bigger, better, faster games

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Thanks for joining us.

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One last thing, we want to say: It is a pleasure to know that you will make us by the way. You've been seen. As our first issue was brought to you by the Internet and we'll be at the PC ACCELERATOR – a place that never will just do it. Thank you and good night!

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THE SAFETY DISC

PCXL WORLD EXCLUSIVE: CANADIAN DISC-O

This month's disc page starts with a request to all the ranters on our website: Please, for the love of God, let the U.S. vs. Canada argument die! As a gesture of peace, we brought in '80s Canadian relics Men Without Hats to do this month's song

*As we can disc if we want to, we can leave your friends behind
'Cause your friends don't disc, and if they don't disc*

*Well they're no friends of mine
I say, we can go where we want to, a place where they will never find
And we can act like we came from out of this world
Leave the real one for behind*

I say we can disc, we can disc, everything's out of control

*We can disc, we can disc we're doing it wolt to wolt
We can disc, we can disc everybody look at your hands
We can disc, we can disc everybody tokin' the chance
Oh well the safety disc
Ah yes the safety disc
Oh well the safety disc
Oh it's the safety disc...*

Thanks, guys, who knew they were Canadian? Although I guess, anyone this weird would have to be ... whoops. If you haven't gotten your discs or they're not working in some way, visit our website at www.pcxl.com and click on the customer service button. Or call 800-333-3890.

LEGEND

- DEMO
- PATCHES
- TOOLS
- A/U
- MAPS
- RATING

DISC

	SLAVE ZERO (EXCLUSIVE DEMO)
	SHADOW COMPANY (EXCLUSIVE DEMO)
	KINGPIN
	MECHWARRIOR 3
	NBA LIVE 99
	HIGH HEAT BASEBALL 2000
	REQUIEM: AVENGING ANGEL
	SHOGO
	UNREAL
	GIANTS
	WARZONE 2100
	DAIKATANA
	ALPHA CENTAURI
	MYTH II
	U-RALLY
	BLOOD II
	SPORTS CAR GT
	SIN
	MARS MANIACS
	KING'S QUEST: MASK OF ETERNITY
	WILD METAL COUNTRY
	UPRISING 2
	TANKTICS
	DEMONSTAR

DISC TWO: HOMEWORLD INTERACTIVE GUIDE AND INFORMATION



Our disc comes with a scrolling interface, which is operated by moving the mouse over the screen. If this is too complicated or you lack the motor skills, then the bar on the left can be used as well. Click left on the mouse to select items and click left again (on the image) to return to the previous screen. If you've ever install a game, then the rest should be elementary.

REQUIREMENTS: WINDOWS 95/98, PENTIUM 133MHZ, 32MB RAM, DIRECTX 5.0, MOUSE, 100% SOUND BLASTER COMPATIBLE CARD

THE DISC MINI-FAQ

- Q:** I want the discs, but I don't get them?
- A:** Did you pay for them? We aren't giving these things away, you know. It costs money to get two discs full of games, patches, and maps. Now quit being cheap and call 800-333-3890 to order your double disc edition now.
- Q:** Where the hell did you find the people in the background on the disk?
- A:** Don't ask.
- Q:** What's a record?
- A:** It's like a big, black, floppy CD.
- Q:** Is anyone reading this?
- A:** I don't know.



the heat is on...



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Key features

- Includes all 22 cars, 16 circuits and official data from the 1998 Formula One World Championship Season.
- Fantastic graphics and speed. Plus 3D card and Force Feedback support.
- Accurate simulation and fun-to-play arcade modes.
- 20+ camera angles and ability to create your own new camera positions.
- Multiplayer support for up to 12 players.
- Informative helicopter fly-over of each circuit.

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Survival of the fastest. Out Now.

Go to <http://pcx1.ign.com/gaming411>: Product Number 24

www.eidos.com



KILL... ♦ ♦ ♦

<http://www.gcd.com>

Other names for Satan → Beelzebub, Prince Of Darkness, Lucifer, Asmodeus, Baal, Jersey PC ACCELERATOR June 1999



REWARD

Making a million seller is easy
when you know how...

In the flaky, ambivalent mind of the PC games player, there are few certainties. But hidden away among *Daikatana* ship dates, *Trespasser*'s static screen-shots, and *Unreal* multiplayer promises, there is a beacon of hope. It bums brightly atop the HQ of Blizzard, the unpretentious developer who, since 1995's *WarCraft: Orcs vs Humans*, has not shipped anything but excellent products that have all sold more than one million units each.

The original *Diablo*'s commercial success (now pushing some two million units worldwide) could almost be expected. It simply pushed a lot of very

simple gameplay buttons very, very well. *StarCraft*'s mammoth success continues to confound the industry: How can a hardcore, deep, and involving realtime strategy game featuring three bizarre races, post numbers that symbolize mainstream success?

There's evidently a game design mechanism that Blizzard never loses sight of throughout the creation of all their products. As the momentous release of *Diablo II* looms ever closer, it's time to take these Blizzard-ites to task, and find out what the hell it is they do. How do they get millions of hardcore gamers to sacrifice most basic bodily functions for "just another minute?"

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

Back in 1995 Crondor Interactive was a small developer looking to move from their console game origins to the PC. Their first concept was to create an action-focused RPG with "the best, most hi-res graphics ever seen," according to company president David Brevik. And so *Diablo* began... but not as you might imagine.

Crondor scored a deal with Sierra based on that simple concept. What they set out to create was a turn-based RPG utilizing many of the gameplay styles of the original X-COM. During a production meeting at Sierra, when the earliest iteration of this *Diablo* was being unveiled within the company, it was met with limited enthusiasm. That meeting changed the course of the game, and the lives of the Crondor developers. It hinged around one chronically simple question: "Why isn't it realtime?" "Who thinks it should be realtime?" Blizzard's Bill Roper offered. All hands in the room were raised.

Okay, but what was Crondor to think? A call goes in to Brevik: "We've had a meeting," Roper said, "and everyone seems to think it should be realtime."

"But we've spent six months working on this turn-based engine," Brevik replied, "I'm going to have to see what everyone else on the team thinks."

As Roper worried for the future of the project, and the possible awkwardness of a strained relationship with Crondor, the call came back.

"So I asked the team," Brevik announced.

"And?" asked Roper, nervously anticipating the potentially acrimonious outcome.

"And everyone here agrees."

And so, the turn-based engine was killed, and the same concept that began life as a turn-based RPG strategy evolved neatly into the massively successful, action-focused, realtime *Diablo*.



HOW DO YOU DO THAT THING THAT YOU DO?

Blizzard North (as Crondor was re-monickered after being swallowed into the gut of the massive Sierra family) has been quietly working on the *Diablo* titles since 1995. In investigating their route to a successful game, I expected a long, drawn out process of assessment, understanding, research, focus testing, playing, testing, playing, and more playing. While that's essentially all part of the kit and caboodle, Brevick suggested something so staggeringly simple, it seemed to put every other



All the textures have been reworked to give the tile sets and buildings a much more vibrant look.

major treatise on game design into a very obvious perspective. His amazingly simple summation about why *Diablo* was so successful made such perfect sense: "It's all about kill ... reward."

If you've never played *Diablo* (it's less than \$20 now in most places, so there's no excuse) it melded the action, RPG, and

adventure genres into a cross-genre whole. While the constant slaughtering of every hell spawn that *Diablo* might throw at you certainly gave it an action skew, it was the RPG-style level progression that kept you going for "just one more encounter," much like turn-based strategy games *Civilization*, *Alpha Centauri*, and *Championship Manager 3*. Add the adventure element of randomly-generated dungeons, and three different characters to take on this epic crusade, and the single player experience was perfectly compelling. With the creation of Blizzard's breakthrough free online multiplayer match-making service, *battle.net*, the package deal made that \$50 last waaaaay longer than 5 movies, 4 medium pizzas, or 1 hooker.

In an industry that just adores its successful franchises, a sequel was inevitable. And so, *Diablo II* is finally shaping for release later this year.

What's important to know is that there are no new rules here, no new design paradigms, no buzzword-driven hype, and no mind-twisting innovation. But that's not to say that there's no thought or appreciation of what was right in the original, or, for that matter, no headaches, issues, or hurdles. "Kill ... Reward" is a design concept that has served the roleplaying game community forever, but Blizzard nailed it. And so, *Diablo II* unashamedly is just like *Diablo*, but bigger and a whole lot better.



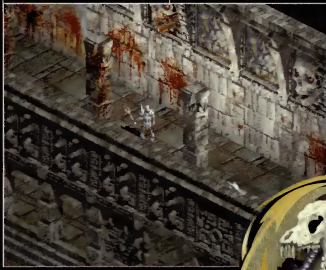
Each character (and monster) has been painstakingly hand animated for a variety of movement and combat styles.

WHAT'S IT ABOUT?

It wasn't surprising that in *Diablo*'s final cinematic, the big red guy did not, in fact, perish forever. Now he's back, but it turns out that mother *Diablo* did the dirty on a couple of other occasions, spawning two brothers who are both now imprisoned on Earth. In a nutshell, all that questing is part of a race between you and *Diablo* to find these two brothers — if he gets there first, it's going to get real hot around Tristram.

As the hero of the hour, it's your unenviable task to assume the power of one of five character classes — Paladin, Sorceress, Necromancer, Amazon, or Barbarian. But where *Diablo* featured just one adventuring area based on the surreal town of Tristram, the sequel is four times the size, incorporating three Acts (plus a fourth, aptly titled "finale"). What is Blizzard hoping to achieve?

"We're trying not to break anything from the first game," offered Brevick. "We're also eliminating cheating and want to add more dynamics to combat as well as improve the depth, options, and branches of the quests."



(Above) Your first look at the Barbarian character in one of the early Act 3 areas. His model is much bigger than the others.



Under 3D acceleration the dense forests gain a depth perspective that creates a more realistic, and more foreboding setting.

IT'S ALL AN ACT

The first Act is set in the same geographical region as the familiar Tristram and is defined by the same pasture-

land, fields, stone walls, and greenery of the original. The towns have had a major overhaul, giving them a life that the static characters of the first lacked. Those characters (different people from the first game, though Cain — always a favorite — returns) that you'll visit regularly will actually wander around the town going about their daily business. Importantly, certain characters will also come racing up to you, offering quests if they need something important done urgently.

Act 2 moves into the desert, featuring more wide-open expanses of land, populated by sand vipers, mummies, and other Egyptian-inspired creatures among columns, pillars, and



hieroglyphic-strewn coffins.

There's a handy helping of scantily-clad female-type creatures whose clothing miraculously falls off when they're slain. It all adds to the appeal!

In the final build-up to the climactic confrontation with Diablo (II) the journey turns to the jungle region of Act 3. In this rainforest setting, where dense jungle foliage limits your movement to streams and waterways, the main threat comes from a cult that has come under an evil influence (you can kinda guess what kind of evil). While the township goes about its daily business as in the other settings, the cult's minions

pursue you, ordered to do the demon's bidding (though unwittingly, as they are unaware the demon controls their leaders).

Mayan, Cambodian, and Inca religious insignia dominate the foreboding architecture, successfully creating a dark and creepy setting. The swamp hides all manner of bizarre beasts, and the eternal light that surrounds your character as you move through the world is one of your few friends. Along the way various quests will, of course, be offered, all leading to a confrontation with the demon, before the finale of Act 4 is unveiled with what's promised to be a not-to-be-missed ending.

Between each of the Acts, a

five minute cinematic will plot out where the story has come from, and where it's heading in the next area (including coverage of the town of Kurast, the center point of Act 3). Blizzard is currently experimenting with linking the four five-minute cinematics into one 20-minute mini-movie (with a few adjusted scenes) to play out as the final pay-off. In the spirit of the fundamental "Kill ... Reward" design concept, this would be a very impressive nod of gratitude for everyone who survives to the end. While *Diablo* could take many hours to complete, the breadth and scope of the sequel is going to require even more adventuring time.

As a taster of what is to come in subsequent Acts, the cinematics (created at Blizzard HQ, not Blizzard North) could become a 20-minute movie at the end.



Quest example: In Act 1 you're asked by Kashya, Captain of the Rogues, to perform a quest. Successfully kill Blood Raven (a heretical priest) and you earn the right to hire Rogue mercenaries. Failure to do this means you can't hire Rogues until you attain a certain level.

SWAG BAG

As in the original, the items that you collect or discover on the quests will make a significant difference to the potency of your character. More care has been taken, however, to avoid the slightly ridiculous nature of dumping all your excess items right on Griswald's doorstep (in the trusting bliss that he'd never wander off with any).

Different classes of items range from high quality non-magic items, through standard magic, to the powerful unique objects. Obviously there are also class specific items to further personalize your character. Many of these issues will make a real difference only when you get on to battle.net and lose yourself to the critical online component. That Crystal Sword or Flaming Sword (that casts light and a wicked fiery effect) might make you look the consummate bad-ass to NPCs, but will score many more points online.

As in *Diablo II*, each kill will reap some kind of reward, but to make the world experience feel a little bit more "right," enemies will drop items that match their type. A creature wielding an axe and a shield is likely to drop an axe and a shield. That said, if an item is not visible, it might just mean that the character isn't using it at that time, and it may still twirl out as booty when he bites the bullet. Mountains of corpses also hindered the collection of treasure in the original game, often making it difficult to spot a magic ring among the mess, but in *DI*, simply hitting the Tab key will highlight where all the treasure has fallen.

WHO DO YOU WANT TO BE TODAY?

Organizing the skills and abilities of the five new character classes has been a challenge, as has creating more diversity among the individuals. In *Diablo II*, any 20th level Rogue was pretty similar to any other 20th level Rogue, regardless of how you allotted the points earned at each experience

EXAMPLE SKILL TREE (SORCERESS)



FIRE BOLT
WARMTH
CHARGED BOLT
ICE BOLT
FROZEN ARMOR
INFERNO
STATIC FIELD

Cast a firebolt missile
(PASSIVE) Increases mana recovery rate
Cast multiple charged bolts
Cast an icebolt missile
Armor class bonus and freeze attacker
Cast a flamejet
Attack everything within a radius with electric charges
Move objects from a distance
Freeze everything nearby
Cast an ice bolt with an area effect
Trail a fire wall
Cast fire bolt with an explosion
Cast an expanding ring of lightning
Cast a bolt of lightning at target
Reduce a target's ability to attack
Create a wall of fire
Enchant target's sword

CHAIN LIGHTNING
TELEPORT
GLACIAL SPIKE
METEOR
THUNDER STORM
ENERGY SHIELD

Cast a retargeting bolt of lightning
Teleport to target location
Cast more powerful Ice Blast
Divert a meteor at target
Lightning bolts from sky strike randomly in a radius
All non-physical damage (and a percent of physical) is deducted from mana, not vitality
Clouds monster vision and destroys missiles
Target does not heal or recharge mana (PASSIVE) Adds damage to fire spells
Summon multi-headed fire beast (PASSIVE) Reduces mana cost of lightning spells
Bombard target area with ice shards (PASSIVE) Reduces target's cold resistance

level. Not so now. In *Diablo II*, a carefully constructed branching skill set lets you define your character's specialties based on your own preferences and the amount of points you have to assign.

Each class has three skill sets that define the core elements of their profession — Auras, Healing and Undead, Combat for the Paladin, for example — with each set subdivided in to a variety of skills or spells. Certain skills can only be

attained after a set level of competency is reached in lower powers, but how you choose to assign the points awarded at each experience level is entirely your call. For the Sorceress, pointing points onto the basic firebolt spell, thus increasing its damage, may be far more effective than skimping on this staple in order to use a more powerful (and entirely more cool) Firewall, albeit with a limited range and duration.

The extra characters have also

meant an increase in the number of skills and spells, allowing the designers' minds to run riot.

Possibly the coolest of the lot is the Necromancer's Corpse Explosion. Slay an enemy and then, as others approach, cast this spell on the corpse and watch it explode in a cloud of blood and gibs, taking out everything around it. It's even more effective in mass bloodbaths, and soon it's raining gibs (hallelujah, it's raining gibs.)



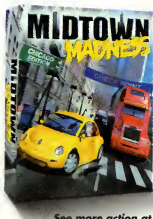
Firewall creates a trail of fire behind you, letting you encircle enemies and see them fry. And the awesome Meteor creates an ominous black cloud that then rains explosive rocks.





0-60 (off a skyscraper)? Yes.

Racers, start your mayhem. Grab hold of one of 10 wild vehicles and race through the windy streets of Chicago, where you'll have to deal with tough opponents, alleyways, drawbridges, newspaper rocks, tunnels, and the police. Throw in five race modes and over 50 city landmarks, and there are plenty of sights to see. Just don't drive like a tourist.



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www.microsoft.com/games/midtown



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Microsoft

Go to <http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411>: Product Number 62

PALADIN

SKILL SETS→ Auras, Healing and Undead, Combat

EXAMPLE SKILLS→ Resist Fire and Cold, Remove Curse, Thorns (return a portion of the damage inflicted on you to the attacker), Fanaticism (inflict extra damage but at the cost of some mana)

MOST LIKELY TO→ Heal the weak, vanquish the undead, speak in English accent

LEAST LIKELY TO→ Wear Bone Armor, party like it's 1999

THINK→ Sir Lancelot



Fighting the good fight, in the name of good, is what the good Paladin does. So there won't be many PCXL paladins, then ...

NECROMANCER

SKILL SETS→ Summoning and Control, Poison and Bone, Curses

EXAMPLE SKILLS→ Create Golems (Blood, Fire, Iron, Clay), Corpse Explosion

MOST LIKELY TO→ Sacrifice a powerful sword just to get an Iron Golem companion, look damn cool, be played by David Bowie in the movie

LEAST LIKELY TO→ Say a nice word to anyone

THINK→ Marilyn Manson



We decided not to pass any comment on this spell effect ...



Likely the coolest class of the lot, raising and exploding the dead are all skills in the armory.



SORCERESS

SKILL SETS→ Fire, Lightning, Cold

EXAMPLE SKILLS→ Mana Regeneration, decreasing a monster's natural resistance to an element, Firewall, Meteor Storm (see Example Skill Tree)

MOST LIKELY TO→ Be weak at low levels

LEAST LIKELY TO→ Be seen naked

THINK→ Sabrina the Teenage Witch

"CHARMED" APPRENTICES



Alyssa Milano: Devilishly attractive, but her mom sucks



Who's this? They couldn't get Winona Ryder, huh?



Shannon Doherty: She seems such a sweet, passive girl



Using the Firebolt will let the Sorceress keep her lightly-armored frame away from the hacks (as in swords, not us journalist types).



Mana regenerates, with the rate determined during beta testing.



CASTING CALL: THE AMAZON



LUCY LAWLESS

EXPERIENCE→ She plays one on TV
STRENGTHS→ Already has the outfit
WEAKNESSES→ No apparent acting ability
VERDICT→ The true Amazon woman of the '90s, she is clearly the best choice



SHANNON TWEED

EXPERIENCE→ Starred in *Conan: Women in the Avocado Jungle Of Death*
STRENGTHS→ Likes to get naked
WEAKNESSES→ Getting a bit old to be seen naked
VERDICT→ Ten years ago the role would be hers



HEIDI KLUM

EXPERIENCE→ Has appeared nude on sandy beaches
STRENGTHS→ Not as well
WEAKNESSES→ None known
VERDICT→ We'd watch two hours of her, listening to Kenny G and still be quite happy



LYNDA CARTER

EXPERIENCE→ Giant '80s pin-up, can work a lasso
STRENGTHS→ Size
WEAKNESSES→ Haven't seen her in about 15 years, eyeright
VERDICT→ Good for nostalgia, but not much else



BRIDGETTE NIELSEN

EXPERIENCE→ Plays one in every movie role
STRENGTHS→ Scary as hell to look at
WEAKNESSES→ Married Sly, so questionable judgement
VERDICT→ At over 6' tall, the Amazon is a role she has to play

Amazon

SKILL SETS→ Javelin and Spear, Healing, Movement and Repair, Bow and Crossbow

EXAMPLE SKILLS→ Plague Javelin, Repair Items, Fire Bolts

MOST LIKELY TO→ Have a huge chest, wear skimpy chainmail underwear, be featured in the promotional material

LEAST LIKELY TO→ Remove one breast to fire the bow more easily

THINK→ Xena



The Amazon's armor fitter is a true expert in his field. But what's the chance that under the shapely armor beats a AA chest?



BARBARIAN

SKILL SETS→ War Cries, Combat, Masteries

EXAMPLE SKILLS→ Rally, Armor repair, use axes

MOST LIKELY TO→ Wield a mammoth axe like a toothpick, wear an animal skin loincloth, use monosyllabic yells as a form of communication

LEAST LIKELY TO→ Study the indigenous flora, paint, give a damn what anyone thinks

THINK→ Ah-nuld



The Barbarian's War Cries mean that he's only going to have to raise his voice to scare the bejeebers out of enemies.



The new interface lets you access your most used skills more easily.

THE SECOND PLACE CAR DOESN'T GET



EVERYONE
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ESRB



PC



A TROPHY.

IT IS THE TROPHY.



The price you pay for losing isn't just pride. It's your 396 hp exotic. Watch for nasty hairpins. Aggressive opponents who might damage your baby. And, of course, the cops. They all want to see you lose it in a very big way.



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BATTLING ON BATTLE.NET

Three different classes gave you three good reasons to go through the single player game of *Diablo*. Random dungeon generation and varying quests supplied still more options if your lust for adventuring still wasn't satiated. And even when that was done, there was *battle.net*. Blizzard broke the mold of the pay-to-play online services by supporting their game with their own dedicated (and free) service. *Battle.net* proved to be a huge hit, but suffered from one major fault: It was hackable and degenerated into a mess of cheats, destroying the early promise of a Gauntlet-esque dungeon crawl with buddies.

Eliminating cheating was a primary focus of *Diablo II*. For starters, the networking code has been completely reworked as a client-server setup, whereby all the information regarding your character is stored on the server. In the original peer-to-peer system, the character information was on the host (your) computer, which gave hackers time to work on the files, find out how they were constructed, and then rework them. So the economy of the *Diablo* universe became a joke, player-killers ruled, and many people missed out on the fun dungeoneering (it's a word, trust us)



Real adventurers never run away. Ever.

that was available, simply because they were unwilling to deal with the cheaters.

For *Diablo II* the economics will play a more integral role, with trading now taking place with its own interface screen. This will avoid the crazy dance ritual from the original that forced paranoid players to drop items, then carefully circle around to the other guy's object, in order to ensure that nobody was ripped off. More powerful items are going to cost vast sums, guaranteeing that the game remains entertaining even for 40th level characters. Unique items can be added to the world, sparking treasure hunts, and quests will be designed to give the higher level characters a real challenge.

But what's really going to



The single player game quests can also be accomplished on *battle.net*, with more items and quests added over time.

make a difference to the *Diablo II* community is the creation of Guild Halls. Buying a Guild Hall will be a major undertaking, costing vast sums and requiring the pooling of several characters' worldly wealth. A political structure will be in place whereby the Guild Master names the guild, chooses its colors, and maintains the list of those who can enter. The hall remains in place as kind of a persistent hideaway within the *battle.net* world. Elections

may be included to allow political coups. Since the Guild Master can title members and is the only one able to spend the money earned, it will be a powerful, and therefore highly coveted position.

Many details of *battle.net*'s new structure will be tested out during the beta test. Positions at that event will be a hot property, but strictly limited. The big show-down will be featured in an upcoming issue of PCXL, as we hide away for a weekend of gaming with the winners of our exclusive contest (see page 29). Blizzard hopes that hackers will try to beat their server setup, enabling them to plug any gaps in security. Testing of the server integrity with large numbers of players (currently up to 60,000 have been playing *StarCraft* simultaneously) will be critical, as well as some of the gameplay mechanics still under consideration, such as the stamina bar, and how the new one-click auto-fire mechanic works (which, thankfully, means no more manic mouse-clicking).

With the persistent Guild Halls, *battle.net* becomes more compelling and even starts to pitch it against the likes of *Everquest*.



The list of different monster types runs to several pages, though evil demoness Andariel (see X-Tra) is the team's favorite.



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NEW WORLD
ORDER...*

*...AND THEN
DESTROY IT!*

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THE INSIDES

Skills and spells are essentially broken into two categories — active and passive — and are balanced carefully with some even requiring reagents (such as the iron sword to summon a Necromancer's Iron Golem) in order to be cast correctly. All the skills and spells are accessed from an icon-driven interface that is easy to access, but requires you to learn and remember the corresponding symbol for each skill in the heat of the battle. Of course, to offset the power of the more potent effects, each character has a mana quotient that drains when skills are used. While in the original all you need do after a hectic battle was wander off to a quiet location and wait for it to replenish, *Blizzard* is planning on making this game a little harder. Possibilities include increasing the number of wandering creatures, thereby making you think more about how much power to use in certain situations.

Other game mechanic issues include the addition (thankfully) of running. During the beta test it's likely that a stamina bar will be tested. Stamina could decrease after excessive running, and add another strategy element of judging when to walk and when to run, ensuring you're healthy enough to get clear of danger should the proverbial shit hit the fan.



In the original game all the monsters appeared out of thin air. For this sequel, some enemies will emerge from a Gauntlet-esque spawn base that needs to be destroyed to stop them.

Of course, when you need to leave, the Town Portal spell makes a return, and is also joined by a waypointing system that links locations in which you've traded. These are stored and can be brought up to zap you between locations without having to traipse through a number of levels. The four CD set (one for each Act) covers a vast expanse of land, but in the new engine, *Blizzard* has worked diligently to reduce the level load times that hindered the flow and immersive capacity of the original. In *Diablo II*, the levels are generated at the beginning of the game and loaded during the cinematic, so that each location is

entered and exited seamlessly. "It's amazing how immersive it is not having to pause for a few minutes

at the load screens," commented Bill Roper. The time of day can also effect quests and items, as well as visibility. Certain quests (or monsters) will only be triggered at night, and items such as the Moon Sword have better effects when wielded at night.

One major addition to the game engine is 3D support using the Glide API. (While it's possible that D3D may get a look-in, the 3Dfx-accelerated load screen of the demo build we witnessed suggested that Glide will be the only acceleration option.) Software mode still looks amazing — as the game was intended. Though it initially seemed to be merely a marketing gimmick to get the 3D accelerator crowd interested, the 3D mode, fortunately, looks to be adding something pretty substantial. While the benefit is not instantly apparent, if you look

closely as your character moves, parallax scrolling techniques make the trees and other inanimate objects move in the background to add a depth of perspective. The effect is subtle but this new perspective makes the character's movement and interaction with the environment so much more effective.

SO WHERE'S IT AT?

Of course you want to know when *Diablo II*'s going to be done. While *StarCraft* slipped several months due to balancing issues, *Blizzard* is hoping that the limited beta test (that you can be part of, courtesy of PCXL) will help iron out many issues and allow them to hit stores around September. As an indication of their progress, Brevik told us that they finished all the details of Act 1 just one day after the scheduled milestone (a feat unheard of in the software business, especially at *Blizzard*).

Diablo II is certainly a mammoth undertaking in its scope and scale, if not in revolutionary new ideas, such is *Blizzard*'s desire not to mess with something that isn't broken. Let's face it, as soon as you get in there, kill that first creature, grab the coins, and see the experience points add up, you might as well kiss the next few days goodbye. So long as *Blizzard* maintains the tremendous balance for which they have been lauded, and make the network code hack-free, there's no doubt that *Diablo II* is set to be the biggest-selling game of the year.



Andariel (inset) is one of the three Act-ending bosses to face as you make sure those happy workers live free of tyranny ...



E-MAIL:

6' 6"

6' 0"

5' 6"

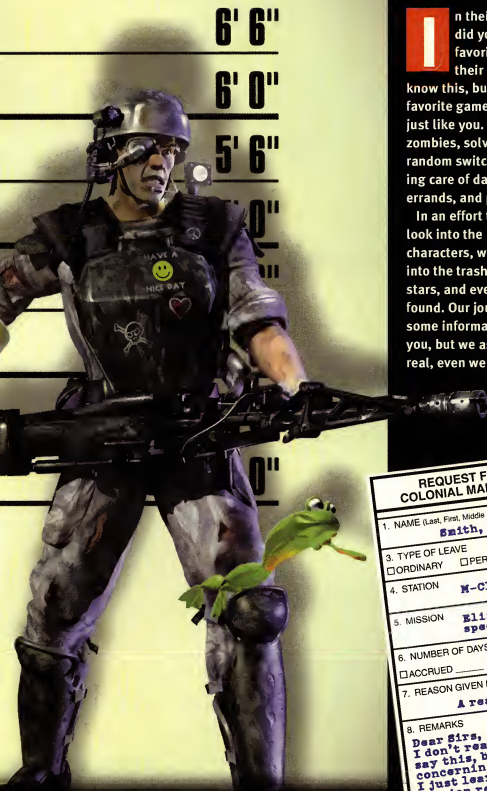
5' 0"

4' 6"

4' 0"



THE USUAL SU



In their day jobs they entertain, but did you ever wonder what your favorite game characters did during their off hours? You probably didn't know this, but the heroes and villains of your favorite games lead normal, mundane lives just like you. When they aren't busy slaying zombies, solving conundrums, and flipping random switches, they spend their time taking care of day-to-day issues such as bills, errands, and paperwork.

In an effort to give you an unprecedented look into the private lives of computer game characters, we did a little dumpster diving, into the trash bins of gamedom's biggest stars, and even we were surprised at what we found. Our journalistic endeavor yielded some information that may shock and amaze you, but we assure you, this stuff is real ... so real, even we couldn't have made it up.

REQUEST FOR TEMPORARY LEAVE COLONIAL MARINE MILITARY FORM A-640	
1. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial) Smith, John, L	2. RANK Pvt. 2nd Class
3. TYPE OF LEAVE <input type="checkbox"/> ORDINARY <input type="checkbox"/> PERMISSIVE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EMERGENCY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER	
4. STATION M-Class Crusier USS Suicide	
5. MISSION Eliminate undesignated alien species on planet Renal VII	
6. NUMBER OF DAYS LEAVE *As many as possible <input type="checkbox"/> ACCRUED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REQUESTED <input type="checkbox"/> ADVANCED	
7. REASON GIVEN FOR REQUEST A really bad feeling about this	
8. REMARKS <p>Dear Sirs, I don't really know exactly how to say this, but I have a few doubts concerning our mission on Renal VII. I just learned that my role in the mission requires me to run screaming into an alien lair, firing my weapons into the air until I am eaten or made into an alien fetus incubator. I feel confident that my coworkers could pick up the slack for me if I weren't able to make it this time.</p> <p>I am willing to work a double shift the following week to make up for this leave time. Thank you for your understanding in this matter.</p>	

THE USUAL SUSPECTS

PSYCHIATRIC EVALUATION TRANSCRIPT

DOCTOR C. EVERETT JUNIAN
SUBJECT: Earl (*The frog from Frogger*)

DR. JUNIAN: Earl, why do you feel you must cross the road?

EARL: Ribbit

DR. JUNIAN: Why the self-destructive behavior?

EARL: Ribbit

DR. JUNIAN: Why must you prove yourself through these endless quests?

EARL: Ribbit

DR. JUNIAN: Could it be because of your poor relationship with your father?

EARL: Ribbit (with tears in his eyes)

DR. JUNIAN: I think we've had a breakthrough.

MEMO

From: The Jay
Kesselstein
Talent Agency

To: Colonel John Blade

Sorry about the Sin and Wages of Sin gigs. Who'd have thought they'd both bomb? But don't give up hope just yet kid, I came across this in the local paper. It looks like we're back in business!

CENTRAL CASTING - Wanted: Actors to play lead roles in major videogames set in a post-apocalyptic future. Must have experience being both grim and gritty. Must have shoulder length hair, own a black overcoat, and shave only occasionally. Gravelly voice a plus. Plenty of roles available, enough for almost everyone. *Lozano-Lamas need not apply.*



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DEAR MR. QUAKE GRUNT,

Thank you for choosing Ace Travel Agency to plan and organize your vacation once again. Below is your first day itinerary. Please call if there are any problems:

6:00 AM: Depart L.A. X
8:15 AM: Crash land on deserted planet
8:30 AM: Kill several cyberdemons
8:45 AM: Find Key
8:50 AM: Kill more cyberdemons
9:00 AM: Use Key
9:15-12:00 PM: Repeat cycle
12:00 PM: Lunch, discussion time
12:30-5:00 PM: Return To Cycle
5:00 PM: Free Time, sightseeing
6:00 PM: Dinner and battle with final boss
8:00 PM: Leave deserted planet
10:00 PM: Crash land in Hades

GORDON FREEMAN

Current Address:
1236 Fairbanks Avenue
Seattle, Washington

OBJECTIVE

A position in which I can contribute my skills and grow as a person, without trudging through slime and shooting alien beasts

EDUCATION

M.I.T., Boston, Mass.
Graduated 1999
Masters degree in Quantum Physics. Minor: Cart pushing

SKILLS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- Good with a crowbar
- Can leap from crate to crate with much aplomb
- Experience getting rid of "head crabs"
- Have traveled through interdimensional portal and destroyed evil alien nation

EMPLOYMENT

BLACK MESA LABS
Black Mesa, New Mexico
Research Associate — June 1999 until gate from hell opened

- Was in charge of pushing carts into radioactive plasma beams
- Drank lots of soda and ran around the office, sidestepping frequently
- Friendly with most other employees, except security forces

SAFEWAY

Seattle, Washington
Bag Boy — June 1996-1999 (summers)

- Responsible for all aspects of cart pushing for the #1 grocery store in Seattle

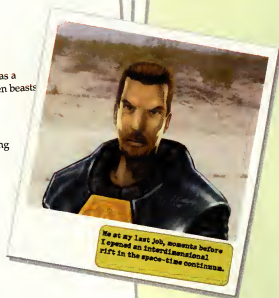
ACTIVITIES

- Running and jumping
- Having a beer with Barney after a long day at the office
- Like to annoy, bug, and occasionally bash in the heads of nasally scientists

R

REFERENCES

All Dead



He at my last job, moments before I opened an interdimensional rift in the space-time continuum.

A large, dark, metallic character with glowing green eyes and a wide, toothy grin, set against a dark, textured background.

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-COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

"A REAL INNOVATION"
-NEXT GENERATION

"BEST OF E3"
-GAMESPOT

DOWNLOAD THE DEMO
WWW.SZDEMO.COM

ACCOMPLISH

COMING THIS SUMMER

Go to <http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411>: Product Number 13

THE USUAL SUSPECTS

DEAR MR. HUKEM

As your legal counsel I must warn you of several impending lawsuits. Three separate cases have been lobbed against you and I fear more may be on the way. Because of your fame and wealth I am sure that we can beat these cases (see William Jefferson Clinton vs. Bin-bos 2 - 9 and Orenthal James Simpson vs State of California, for legal precedence). However, I implore you to avoid similar problems in the future by substituting the following phrases in place of your usual vernacular.

ORIGINAL PHRASE: "Come get some"

ALTERNATE PHRASE: "Pardon me ma'am, but I can't help but notice how beautiful you are. Would you like to have a non-threatening dinner engagement with me?"

ORIGINAL PHRASE: "Shake it, baby"

ALTERNATE PHRASE: "I am impressed with the discipline it takes to maintain such a healthy physique. Would you like to demonstrate your training regimen in a non-threatening environment?"

Dear Mom and Dad,

I am truly excited about my new assignment on this uncharted planet, setting up a base for the Star-Craft Terran Corps. I finally feel that I am part of something really special. I have already built a command center, a supply depot, and barracks. Everyday new people arrive and I like it even more. Wait a minute. I hear something. I'll be right back.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Random Soldier,

I am sorry to report that your son was tragically killed while defending a meaningless decoy base from a horde of attacking Zerglings. I was proud to have him serve under me and I will never forget uh... what's his name. You would be proud to know that he... Wait just a minute... what's that noise? Arrgh...

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Terran Parental Units

No part of my job is more difficult than this. My minions have devoured your beloved son. You should not be proud of him, he died a screaming coward. He was just one of many I killed today, so I must be brief, I have many more letters to write.

Sincerely, *The Brood Queen*

Dear Ms. Elexis Sinclair

Thank you very much for your invaluable business advice and guidance during our recent board meetings. If implemented correctly, your suggestions will easily push our stock prices well beyond year-end forecasts. However, after you left the meeting a few of the board members drafted a suggestion that we believe might make our next meetings with you even more productive.

In short, we would greatly appreciate it if you would not wear leather or see-through "teddies" to the board meetings. We understand the company's liberal "Casual Friday" policy probably loosens the restrictions of typical business attire, but you must realize that Microsoft has restricted the wearing of lingerie during workdays.

We ask in the future that you also refrain from wearing any clothes to board meetings that may be described with the adjectives "slinky," "edible," or "French Maid."

Thank you,
The Board of SinTech

AUTO INSURANCE ACCIDENT INFORMATION FORM

KEEP THIS DOCUMENT IN YOUR GLOVE COMPARTMENT

IF YOU HAVE AN ACCIDENT, use this form to record the facts about the accident, including names and addresses of all parties involved, and have witnesses to the accident. Fill in the completed form to your insurance agent or company, or provide the information by phone.

NAME: **Max Damage** (from Carmageddon II) DATE: **5/24/99**

LOCATION OF ACCIDENT: **Multiple**

DESCRIPTION OF ACCIDENT: **Uh, I hit some people in a park and then I ran over a penguin and then hit another car. After that I ran over a few more people, hit an elk, and then ran into another car. Later I drove through six buildings, ran over some more people, destroyed a dump truck, and ran over an elephant. Some more of this kind of stuff happened later... I think.**

AUTHORITY CONTACTED: **A police officer... with my front bumper**

ANY VIOLATIONS/ CITATIONS AS A RESULT OF THE ACCIDENT: **Manslaughter, Murder One, Murder Two, child endangerment, animal cruelty, the entire first three quarters of the driving code, failure to stop at a red light, other minor violations**

PROPERTY DAMAGE (NOT YOUR VEHICLE): **Seven cars, 15 houses, 23 fences, and a big, glass bear statue**

INSURANCE COMPANY: **None**

INJURED PARTIES: **115 (see attached list for relations and identification of body parts)**

WITNESSES: **None Living**

NEW YORK STATE

DRIVER LICENSE

DAMAGE, MAX, M
666 EL DIABLO WAY
NEW YORK NY
11666

SEX: M EYES: RED HT: 6-00 CLASS: D
END: REST: B
ISSUED: 12-22-95 EXPIRES: 11-13-99

Max Damage 8675309

GLENDALE HILLS PLASTIC SURGERY CLINIC
Medical Record Form # 756-454

PATIENT NAME: Lara Croft
OCCUPATION: Adventurer
NOTORIETY FACTOR: High

INSURANCE: Eidos
SILICON: 63%

DATE	DESCRIPTION	CHARGES	NOTES
7/96	Breast Aug.	\$2,750.00	1
7/96	Waist Lipo.	\$1,150.00	2
7/96	Collagen Lip Fill	\$375.00	3
6/97	Secondary Breast Aug.	\$3,350.00	4
7/98	Breast Reduction	\$3,000.00	5

- Notes:
- Under the advice of Eidos Insurance, subject gets breasts augmented to the size of "majority distracting."
 - Waist size reduced to twelve inches. Spleen and six ribs removed
 - Patient requested the "Barbara Hershey" collagen lip treatment
 - Under the advice of Eidos, subject would like breasts made the size of "small Bosnian village."
 - Patient unhappy with implications of current breast size, demands reduction. Sales reduction follow closely thereafter, but that's their problem.



A LETTER FROM VISA

Dear Barbie,

Since you have been a loyal customer for over 15 years we consider you more than just a cardmember, we consider you a valued friend. We found the following items purchased on your card while you were working on the smash hit *Barbie Fashion Designer*. We realize that they are likely not your purchases, but the charges of someone who may have stolen your card. In these cases it is often a loved one who has access to your most personal possessions. Please let us know if you did not intend to buy the following items:

One Macho, Macho, Minivan.....\$16,490.00
Rental of a Malibu beach house for a Ken and his "personal valet" Skipper.....\$1,650.00
Purchase of one pair "My Lump Looks Almost Real" prosthetic underpants.....\$325.00

We hope you will find no errors on our part. Please contact our customer service department with any question in regards to this bill.

Edward Hathaway,
Visa Consumer Affairs

Dear Mr. Turok,

I regret to inform you that your invitation to the post-Oscar gala that I will host along with my wife, Kim Basinger, has been rescinded. As longtime members of PETA we find it morally reprehensible that you would choose to affix a genocidal rage upon harmless reptiles. We fully realize that Mother Nature mounted missile launchers on the heads of some of the Triceratons that you hunt, and, yes, many of the Tyrannosaurs that you face kill small children and are armed with projectile weapons, but they are just part of the delicate balance of our ecosystem.

Remember what my wife once actually said: "A nation can only be as strong as it treats its animals." What would happen to America if we advocated the wholesale slaughter of cybernetically-enhanced dinosaurs? I shudder to think.

If you would renounce your ways and turn your aggressions to more vile creatures such as celebrity photographers, we would certainly be willing to reconsider your invitation.

Alce Baldwin



http://www.mad.com

PC ACCELERATOR June 1999 Abe (Aves Odyssey) -> 5 empty bottles of Bean-O, 2 empty boxes of Tagamet



PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT YOUR ANSWERS IN THE SPACE PROVIDED BELOW EACH ITEM.	
1. SURNAMES OR FAMILY NAMES (Exactly as in Passport) Alien	DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE
2. FIRST NAME AND MIDDLE NAME (Exactly as in Passport) The Queen	I have reviewed this file, and while I have some questions concerning a few of the responses, the applicant papers are complete and fully check out. Perhaps we should schedule an interview.
3. OTHER NAMES (Maiden, Religious, Professional, Aliases) Bug Bitch, No. No. AARGH!	
4. DATE OF BIRTH (Day, Month, Year) 07/08/98	5. PASSPORT NUMBER 763721
6. PLACE OF BIRTH (City, Province, Country) The chest of Corp. Sanders	
7. NATIONALITY Alien	8. SEX <input type="checkbox"/> MALE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FEMALE
9. COLOR OF HAIR None	10. COLOR OF EYES Black
11. COMPLEXION Shiny	12. HEIGHT 4'8"
13. DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS 22 Tail, 2nd Mouth	14. NAMES AND RELATIONSHIPS OF THOSE TRAVELING WITH YOU 18 Nameless Facehugers and 56,738 incubating pods
15a. HAVE YOU EVER BEEN DENIED A VISA BEFORE? Yes	
15b. IF SO, WHY? I ate my last immigration officer	
16. WHO WILL FURNISH FINANCIAL SUPPORT (including travel) Colonial Marines 12th Brigade	
17. AT WHAT ADDRESS WILL YOU STAY IN THE U.S. All of them	
18. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR TRIP? Genocide	
19. HOW LONG DO YOU PLAN TO STAY IN THE U.S. Until we've devoured the entire population	
20. Have you ever been afflicted with a communicable disease of public health significance? yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	
21. Have you ever been arrested or convicted for any offense or crime, even though subject of a pardon, amnesty or other such legal action? yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	
22. Have you ever been a controlled substance (drug) trafficker, or a prostitute or procurer? yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	
23. Do you seek to enter the United States to engage in export control violations, subversive or terrorist activities or any unlawful purposes? yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	
NONIMMIGRANT VISA APPLICATION	
OPTIONAL FORM 157 (Rev. 6-93) PAGE 1 Department of State	
5110-130 PREVIOUS EDITIONS OBSOLETE	
NON-1218221-4-020518	



Junior at Disneyland

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ALL-NEW DARK SIDE ENGINE.

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SoftwareForPCs.com

3 Idiots *and a* PC

Who agreed to let the PCXL staff splash out over a grand on PC components and expected the fools to be able to put it all together, and get it to work? Well, it happened, and exuding confidence (really, Rob was cautiously optimistic), they locked themselves away in the main conference room — men with a mission.

Bleary-eyed, they emerged hours later, sanity intact, all fingers accounted for, and with one highly-stylish PC. And y'know? The damn thing worked. Witness, with us, PCXL PC's birth ...



W

here the hell do you start? Hot new games are requiring hot new hardware, but

what's the best upgrade option?

With plummeting PC prices you might as well buy a whole new machine, rather than swap out nearly every component. The best choice for you depends on what you want to achieve. So, in typically helpful PCXL style, we ventured into the world of Johnny No-Freebies and bought all the kit necessary to build our machine from scratch.

Our goal in this endeavor wasn't to keep within a specific price range (other than the limit of Rob's credit card), but to get the pieces of the jigsaw and show how they all fit together into one kick-ass package. Along the way we'll pass on a few pearls of wisdom on what to do in a variety of situations that may arise. So strap in and get out the shot glass, here's the first PCXL gaming machine building exercise (complete with mandatory leopard-print beer holder attachment).

*Note: All prices for CPUs and RAM vary on a daily basis and are reasonably accurate as of press time

THE CASE

THINGS TO CONSIDER→ Power supply is important, with the newer cases sporting 250-Watt (and even 300-Watt) power. Other elements are the actual size (mini-, mini- and full-tower) and the size of motherboard it holds (AT or ATX are the two different sizes — see literature to find out which size the motherboard is)

LIKELY CONSIDERATIONS→ AT, ATX, Mid-tower, mini-tower

OUR CHOICE→ Mid-tower ATX 250Watt

WHY→ Most of the newer boards are ATX size — so that's a no-brainer. For size, we opted for mid-tower (slightly larger than mini-tower) to allow more space for future upgrades and additions. Thinking ahead and planning for the machine you hope to have a year from now will help make many of your buying decisions

COST→ \$45

THE MOTHERBOARD

THINGS TO CONSIDER→ Physically, the size (AT or ATX), number, and variety of slots (ISA, PCI and AGP) is important. The chipset is crucial (with the Intel BX440 being the current popular choice) as is the BIOS (the operating system that runs the core functions of your board). Bus speed is vital, as well, as this will effect your RAM configuration options (boards are generally 66MHz or 100MHz). Faster is better and will offer more upgrading options down the road. The number of RAM (DIMM) slots limits your total memory capacity. Possibly the most important decision, however, concerns the type of processor slot. There are essentially two types, with another gaining popularity:

1) Slot 1 — the newer style that seems to be the way Intel is going with their PII and PIII chips

2) Socket 7 — the easy-to-install square chip release mechanism currently favored by the AMD K6-2 chips

3) Socket 370 — a newer format that Intel will pursue with its future Celeron processor line (It's cheaper to produce and therefore will keep down the cost of this budget chip format)

LIKELY CONSIDERATIONS→ CPU slot format, bus speed, add-on card slots (likely 2 ISA, 4 or 5 PCI and 1 AGP)

OUR CHOICE→ Abit BX6 v2.0 (100MHz bus speed, Slot 1, 5 PCI slots)



Lesson 1: 2 long black slots = ISA, 5 white slots = PCI, 1 brown slot = AGP, other black slot = processor, 4 black slots = RAM



The starting equipment. C'mon down, the price was right for this bundle of PC component excellence.

WHY→ This particular Abit board comes with Soft Menu software that lets you use the motherboard's software setup (CMOS) to set and tweak processor speeds and voltage. This basically eliminates fiddling with jumper settings on the board (those little bits of plastic that fit over different arrays of pins). It has all the features currently important — Intel BX440 chipset, AGP support, and many different high-powered CPU options

COST→ \$114

THE PROCESSOR

THINGS TO CONSIDER→ Slot type (see "Motherboard" above), speed, and cost. Are you prepared to overclock (using your motherboard's power to make the processor faster than it's intended)?

LIKELY CONSIDERATIONS→ AMD K6-2, Intel PII, Intel Celeron, Intel PIII

OUR CHOICE→ Intel Celeron PII 400

WHY→ Our Slot 1 motherboard ruled out an AMD option, and the Celeron is very well priced and provides the opportunity for over-clocking. Reputable tests have shown the Celeron 366 clocking in speeds over 500MHz. We were trying for something more accessible — overclocking a 400MHz Celeron to nearly 500MHz

COST→ \$140

THE HARD DRIVE

THINGS TO CONSIDER→ Size and price. Today's obese games mean that you're likely to need at least 6GB. The bigger you go, the lower the \$-per-GB cost. Other factors include speed and SCSI options. SCSI is a much faster, but more complicated setup, since you'll need a SCSI adapter card (around \$150). Also, SCSI hard drives are significantly more expensive than their EIDE (Enhanced IDE) brethren, going for around \$650. Unless you're an expert user and have cash to burn, stick with EIDE, and upgrade to SCSI later

LIKELY CONSIDERATIONS→ 6GB to 10GB, brand names (Seagate, Western Digital Quantum)

OUR CHOICE→ 10.1GB Western Digital Caviar Ultra DMA/33

WHY→ At under \$200 (after rebate) it represents great value, though its 9.5ms seek time is not the fastest on the market

COST→ \$180 (after \$50 rebate)



Lesson 2: Install the processor and RAM before attaching the board to the case.

THE RAM

THINGS TO CONSIDER→ The motherboard determines the type of RAM you need and it's all getting more complicated. In a nutshell, get as much as you can afford (you can never have too much), but remember that DIMMs (the newer 168-pin varieties supported by the new motherboards) are cheaper than SIMMs. So, if you've shelled out on a new motherboard (supporting DIMMs), you could be actually saving money in your RAM upgrade since, for example, you can get a 32MB SIMM for about \$65 and a 32MB DIMM for \$40. Another factor is speed. PC100 SDRAM (DIMMs) run at 100MHz bus speed (as opposed

to 66MHz or lower) if your motherboard supports it
LIKELY CONSIDERATIONS→ EDO RAM SIMMs for older systems, or PC100 SDRAM for the shiny new boards
OUR CHOICE→ 128MB PC100 SDRAM
WHY→ It's fast and uses the full power of our 100MHz motherboard
COST→ \$148

THE VIDEO CARD

THINGS TO CONSIDER→ For gamers, this is the most upgradeable component and the one that can have the greatest impact on your gaming experience. There are many, many options, but here are a few of the most fundamental:

- 1) **TNT** → This 2D/3D option scores very high, with excellent Direct3D support, and an increasing number of games supporting OpenGL. (Note that blistering TNT2s are due mid-April.)
- 2) **Matrox G200 + Voodoo 2** → The G200 is an outstanding 2D board, but you need the Voodoo 2 for a real gaming kick. If you need to ask why that is, remember, you picked up **PCXL** instead of *Home Needlework Weekly*.
- 3) **Voodoo Banshee** → Another integrated 2D/3D option gives the "oomph" of Voodoo (if not quite Voodoo 2 performance) in one board. Quantum X24 offers great power in a single card (though Voodoo 3 is heading out very shortly, also)



Lesson 3: With the hard drive and CD-ROM in place, with cables connected, install the mainboard and attach the cables.

Another issue to consider is AGP over PCI. AGP is a faster variant (and getting faster in 2X and 4X options), whereas PCI cards hold a static bus speed.
LIKELY CONSIDERATIONS→ TNT or adding a Voodoo card to whatever 2D-only you have lying around
OUR CHOICE→ 16MB Diamond Viper 550 AGP
WHY→ Because we had a spare one lying around the office, and it fits the above criteria
COST→ \$102

THE CD-ROM DRIVE

THINGS TO CONSIDER→ Speed is an issue, but it's getting out of hand. We've found that the faster the speed, the greater the likelihood of problems and complications. Currently it's hard to find a drive below 40X speed. CD-ROM drives are also available as SCSI devices, which run faster and more consistently, but for a huge increase in cost (remember that you need a SCSI adaptor card, but can run a couple of devices from it). Also consider getting a CD-Writer (that you can use as a standard 4X drive) for hard drive backups to CD, or other such common uses. Remember, piracy is illegal
LIKELY CONSIDERATIONS→ Brand name and speed
OUR CHOICE→ Genius Super 40X Max
WHY→ It was cheap and basic
COST→ \$55

THE SOUND CARD

THINGS TO CONSIDER→ Game sound can make a major difference to the experience, and that depends on your sound card and speaker setup. As our English teacher once told us, "3D or not 3D" (well, kinda ...) is the main

OVERCLOCKING

A computer is much like a car engine, that can be modified and supercharged, if you know what you're doing. Truthfully, overclocking is pretty routine at lower clock speeds, but as you push the envelope, things gets progressively more hairy. First, you need to make an investment in cooling fans — at least one sitting directly on top of the chip, and one in the case. There are plenty of custom cooling fans out there — for Celons, just some simple browsing will turn them up. We managed to overclock our 400 to 500 with only a few minor problems. That was a bumping up of the chip's FSB (front side bus) speed from 66 MHz to 83 MHz. But like that old game show, once you get to the first level it can be hard to resist the temptation to stop. Here's a handy guide to tell if you may have pushed it too far:

- Steady stream of vapor rising from machine
- You can reboot leftovers by putting plastic on top of computer
- Chip hot enough to heat apartment when landlord shuts off radiator
- CPU radiates its life pool of molten slag
- Visiting friends from 5-star Desert ask you to crack open a window
- Glancing at air over CPU results in "mirage effect"
- When opening door to your apartment, wall of billowing steam issues life highway
- You can fry an egg on the CPU (you know this was coming)
- Your house implodes and turns into a quasar
- Chip temperature hotter than surface of sun, everything in room instantly vaporized

HOW MUCH?

Case	\$45.00
Motherboard	\$114.00
Processor	\$100.00
Hard Drive (10GB 5400rpm)	\$180.00
RAM	\$148.00
Video Card	\$102.00
CD-ROM	\$55.00
Sound Card	\$100.00
Speaker and Subwoofer set	\$75.00
Monitor	\$245.00
Windows	\$90.00
Keyboard	\$15.00
Mouse	\$20.00
Beer holder	\$1.50
Excess amounts of decorative pieces	\$60.00
TOTAL	1,389.50

WHERE TO SHOP

There are hundreds of low-priced wholesalers selling to the public. Search online for the best prices at www.pricewatch.com.

We bought our kit from:

Tunics Computers, Burlington, VT
(www.tunics.com)

HiTech-USA, San Mateo, CA
(www.hitech-usa.com)

Fry's Electronics

issue. If you have the speaker setup and want to get an all-around loud effect, go for 3D. Early teething problems with the technology seem to have been overcome.

LIKELY CONSIDERATIONS→ Creative's SoundBlaster line dominates, though Aureal's technology and deals with major manufacturers such as Diamond are helping market penetration. Sound card/speaker bundle deals are usually a good value, but aside from the more familiar brand names, tend to have lower quality products to hit the price point. These bundles can still be great, however, for those on a tight budget (unlike the hotshot, high-sounding PCXL team).

OUR CHOICE→ Aureal A3D Vortex 2.0

WHY→ Aureal sent us a bunch of cards and we had one spare

COST→ Around \$100 if purchased off the shelf

THE NECESSARY STUFF

THINGS TO CONSIDER→ A mouse is a must-have and there are many options. Go for a 56K that supports V.90. Get a decent keyboard (test out the W-A-S-D combo for your *Quake II* playing) and a good mouse (check out the first-person shooter controllers piece in the TechPhiles section). Speakers are a real luxury but make sure a subwoofer is included in the deal. The cheaper the speakers, the cheaper the sound. **LIKELY CONSIDERATIONS**→ US Robotics Sportster or Diamond SupraMax v.90 modems, Logitech or Microsoft 3-button mouse, Cambridge Soundworks or Yamaha speakers (4-piece set if you're going full out for 3D sound). **OUR CHOICE**→ Sony speaker/subwoofer set. **WHY**→ Rob had a spare set. **COST**→ \$75

WHEN AND HOW TO UPGRADE

How to start upgrading your machine is a very individual decision and depends on a variety of factors: What you have, what you want, what you need, and how

much cash you have. Right now, a target system should be a PII 400. Unless you've got more cash than useless figurehead Cecil Bloomfield, aim for a setup that's just below the current top-end. This usually gets you the best deal, without getting ripped off. Based on those concepts, follow this guide to find your best route:

WHAT YOU HAVE→ P75-166, 16MB RAM, 4/8X CD-ROM, 2D graphics card, 1-2GB hard drive, up to 28.8 modem

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO→ Start again. If all you want from your old machine is the case, floppy drive, hard drive, keyboard, and bits, then it's best to get a whole new system. Many places are selling complete PII 333MHz Celeron systems for around \$600, and can likely be overclocked to 400MHz. Adding more RAM and a better hard drive to your old PC will help, but you're still flogging an old processor that's day is done. The old motherboards in these units won't support a 400 mhz processor, so adding to this package is useless.

ESTIMATED COST→ \$800-2000 for a new machine

WHAT YOU HAVE→ P200-266, 32MB RAM, 8/16X CD-ROM, 3-4GB hard drive, 2D video card plus Voodoo 1

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO→ You can go one of two ways. Either you buy a new machine, less the salvageable parts on your old rig, for a reduced cost and less tinkering, or you can get your hands dirty and rip this bad boy apart. We suggest opening that big, scary case and getting up to your elbows in silicon.

Check the motherboard to see what max RAM capacity there is, and also if it will support a new processor. Rip out that 233 and plop in a Celeron 400, get the RAM to at least 64MB, pick up an additional hard drive (3-4 GB is good), and get yourself a new video card (Voodoo 3, TNT2, and Savage 4 are all good choices). Now your once aging machine is capable of playing any game (except *Trespasser*, but what machine can't?).

ESTIMATED COST→ \$450

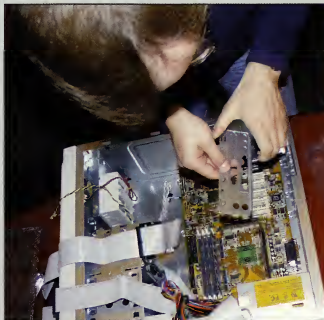
WHAT YOU HAVE→ PII 300-450, 64MB RAM, 32X CD-ROM drive, 6-8GB hard drive, TNT card or good 2D card plus Voodoo 2

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO→ Not much. At this stage it's down to personal preferences and tweaks.

More RAM is always welcome, and simple improvements can be made by upgrading the video card to TNT2 or Voodoo 3. In a year or so that processor is going to start to look slow (those 700MHz's will be heard soon enough), so save this article for when it's time to upgrade.

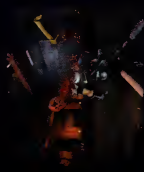
WHAT YOU HAVE→ PIII 500, 128MB RAM, 40X CD-ROM drive, 10GB hard drive, Quantum Obsidium X-24 dual Voodoo 2, gold-plated case

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO→ Share the wealth.



Lesson 4: Most cases come with a variety of boilerplates that need to be affixed. Pick the one that fits all your boards' connectors snugly in place. Screw in place. With screwdriver.

UNREAL™ TOURNAMENT™



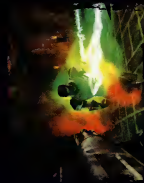
- ◆ All-new and enhanced big body-count weaponry - the Redeemer, the IMPACT Hammer and more.



- ◆ The most complete and challenging online multi-player experience ever.



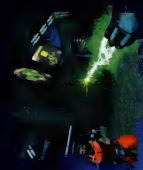
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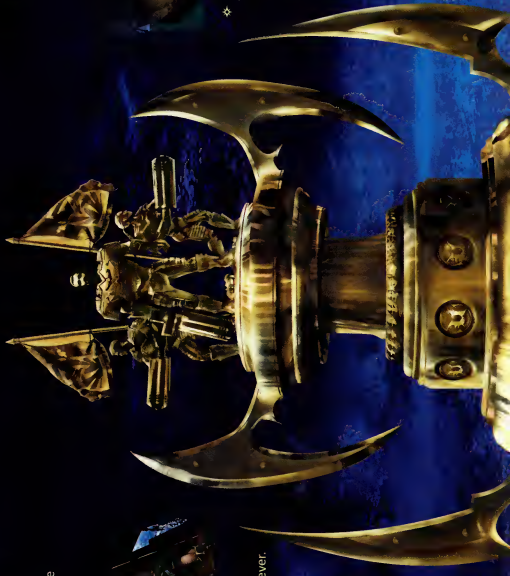
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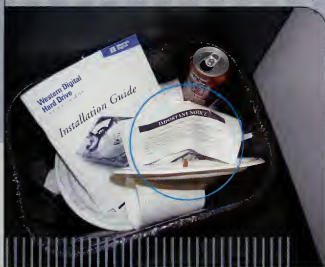
MOD CONTEST

1111 PLATE 11



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INSTALLATION DIARY

One main problem with upgrading your PC is a simple fear of going inside and messing with the guts. It's really not as daunting as it may seem and the main ingredient you need is confidence (and in our case, a few shots of Jagermeister and a six-pack of beer). Follow a few basic rules: Always ground yourself (touch something metallic, like the machine case) before handling any components. Remember that PCs are pretty hardy — treat them firmly but fairly. Remember what you took from where, and keep a record of what you're doing. Follow the instructions in the component manuals. This is not software.

Don't pay through the nose for some spotty dolt at the local hard-

ware store to do 10 minutes of work. Instead, follow PCXL's indispensable guide to the PC's inner workings. Here's how we built an entire machine from scratch ...

DAY ONE→ Purchased all components. Forgot floppy drive. And mouse.

DAY TWO→ Purchased all remaining components (and beer). Located Hector's leftover Jagermeister.

6:15 PM→ Attach CD-ROM drive to the case.

6:25 PM→ Rob: "I am completely confident in what I'm doing."

Lesson 5: This shouldn't need explaining, but don't throw any manuals in the trash. Especially ones concealing important installation diskettes. Okay, Mike?

6:51 PM→ Attempt installation of floppy drive.

6:52 PM→ Realize floppy drive has mysteriously disappeared, attempt to find floppy drive.

6:55 PM→ Floppy drive found, begin installation.

6:56 PM→ Attempt aborted due to drive being installed upside down. ("Creative freedom," Rob pathetically offers.)

6:57 PM→ Attempt to screw floppy drive in place aborted due to screws not fitting.

6:58 PM→ Find other screws that hopefully won't be needed elsewhere. (Success.)

7:00 PM→ Attempt to mount hard drive. (No snickering)

7:01 PM→ Think about mounting Denise Richards and lose screw.

7:02 PM→ Begin attaching hard drive to case (make first concession to what would be easiest by mounting it in a snug 3-5" berth rather than a 5.25").



The boot up. Cross fingers. Utter words to your god.

7:03 PM→ Contemplate working on motherboard. Lose IDE cable.

7:04 PM→ Locate cable in motherboard box, begin connecting it to CD-ROM. Struggle to fit it on.

7:07 PM→ 128MB memory DIMM installed simply into DIMM 1 slot on motherboard without fuss. Rob: "This is a piece of cake! Rock and roll!" [confused looks from everyone else]. Celeron chip slid in to Slot 1 with ease.

7:09 PM→ Discover paper which reads "Important Notice — Read First." Immediately discard paper without reading.

7:10 PM→ Motherboard installation begins. Mike: "So how do you install these?" Rob [the expert]: "Well, see these holes in the bottom? These things might go in those I think. Has anyone seen the boilerplate?"

7:11 PM→ Three boilerplates located. The third one is the right fit, and is duly secured onto case.

Houston, we have ignition. Leave the back of the case off at first and ensure that everything's in fine working fettle.



Check all the power connections, and don't plug anything into external sockets until you're finally ready to go.





The motherboard manual contains CMOS instructions. Read them. Auto-detecting the hard drive is the first function.

See that text? Read it. It's probably important.

If something fails, don't panic. Read the instructions.

7:20 PM→ Motherboard dropped into case. **Rob:** "It should be okay probably."

7:22 PM→ Process delayed by inability to assess which screws should be used. Ed: "Why don't you try just screwing it in? I mean, what's the worst that could happen?" **Rob:** "Well, it's a magnetized screwdriver..." Ed: (pauses) "Ahhhh" (Opens third beer)

7:24 PM→ Unmagnetized screwdriver stolen from IS department

7:25 PM→ Suggestion made to secure board with duct tape. Rob consults the manual.

7:26 PM→ Realizes it's the wrong manual. Profanity ensues.

7:45 PM→ Finally, screws screwed into case, motherboard lined up on top, sitting on those screws, and other screws tightened in to make it secure. Process is officially declared "Pain in the ass."

7:47 PM→ Find random cords. Debate over which to cut first.

7:48 PM→ Realize we're not defusing a bomb, read labels on each colored cord, and find their right spots on the motherboard. Power to motherboard located and fixed in place.

7:57 PM→ Ed [taking feeble notes and drinking beer the entire time]: "I can't believe how easy this was."

8:01 PM→ Connect hard drive IDE cable to IDE 1 on motherboard. Connect CD-ROM IDE cable to IDE 2 on motherboard and ensure jumper settings set to "Master."

8:03 PM→ Unplug IDE cables. Reattach.

8:05 PM→ Discover Celeron fan leftover. Remove chip, secure fan on chip, replace chip.

8:10 PM→ Ed [cracking open second-to-last beer]: "All right, let's fire it up."

8:12 PM→ Plate removed from case to allow 16MB Diamond Viper 550 video card to be pressed into only AGP slot.

8:14 PM→ Areal 3D sound card slotted into next PCI slot.

8:20 PM→ Okay, now let's plug it in. Power turned on. 3-2-1 Ignition.

8:21 PM→ Nothing happens.

8:22 PM→ Mike switches power on at back of machine. Ed burps.

8:23 PM→ At the second attempt, computer flickers to life. Strange burning smell detected.

8:25 PM→ Enter BIOS. Start fiddling, setting date, time, and auto-detecting the hard drive. Use Soft Menu software in CMOS to set processor speed.

8:28 PM→ CPU failed to recognize. Try again, overclocked to 83MHz "What the hell..."

8:45 PM→ Several reboots later, set CPU speed to its default 400 @ 66MHz bus speed. Chip recognizes. Ed deflated.

8:50 PM→ Hard drive not recognizing, though it is in the CMOS.

Realize the EZ-Drive installation diskette is needed. Try to find it.

8:55 PM→ Locate diskette labeled, "Do not discard" in the garbage. Rob glares at Mike. Mike blames Ed.

9:00 PM→ Create Win 95 boot up floppy from another machine. Run EZ-Drive and fume as it fails when accessing the boot up disk.

9:30 PM→ Try another boot up disk from different machine. Success. Get crazy and partition the 10GB drive in to two 5GB parts.

9:45 PM→ Install CD-ROM driver. Insert Win 95 CD and run setup.

10:25 PM→ Install *Quake II*. Everyone does Jagermeister shot.

10:35 PM→ *Quake II* crashes. Reinstall DirectX 6.

10:45 PM→ Run *Quake II* in OpenGL. Ed passes out.

10:55 PM→ Declare the PC building a success — it runs *Quake II*.

You know that it works and everything is fine when *Quake II* burst in to life. Oh happy, happy moment.

But it's still not over. Suitable decoration is totally necessary to give your new machine the style that's required to be a PCXL PC.



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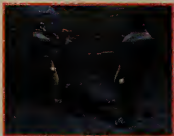
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POWER
OF SPEED



QUAKE II FRAME RATES

32-bit COLOR 800x600

ATI RAGE FURY (RAGE 128 GL)

66 fps

3TB VELOCITY 4400 (RIVA TNT)

46 fps

3TB V00000 3 3000

Not Supported

DIAMOND MONSTER FUSION (BANSHIEE)

Not Supported

Fastest 32-bit color performance

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Go to <http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411>: Product Number 19

Total QUAKE Control

Are the days of mouse and keyboard over?

Well, frankly, no. But that doesn't mean that innovation is dead

Being in complete control of your first-person shooter avatar is the most important element as you strive to get better. All the PCXL staffers are mouse/keyboard (WASD) disciples, but there are other options on the market, and in the perpetual pursuit of Quaking greatness, we took them for a test drive. Here's what we found.

SPACETEC SPACEORB 360

Learning to walk before you run

PRICE→ \$59.00 SRP

BUNDLE→ None

Love it or hate it, the SpaceOrb is the most venerable of the bizarre 3D controllers. It's been around for years, outlived most of its competition, and even developed a small but rabid cult following.

The "orb" itself is a rubber ball affixed to what's basically a gamepad. As the theory goes, you're supposed to pretend that the ball is your head. You can pull it up and down, push it left, right, forward and back, rotate it up and down, and twist it back and forth. Strafing is accomplished by simply pushing it to the left or right, which mimics the "mouse look" of looking around.

The right side of the controller houses six ergonomically placed buttons, two of which are placed for your index finger, while the other four are thumb buttons. A steep learning curve is a major obstacle to overcome. Without exaggeration, it took almost 20 hours of play before I felt comfortable with it, and I still can't come

anywhere close to matching my mousing performance. Pretending this ball was my head didn't help; I wobbled around *Quake II* arenas like a drunken idiot for hours before I made any progress.

For games like *Jedi Knight*, *Battlezone*, and *Half Life*, the six buttons aren't quite enough, though it suffices for *Quake II*. Like most controllers of its kind, the orb requires a specific interface for each game, and SpaceTec IMC has an outstanding record of providing support for new games right away. The SpaceTec Spaceorb 360 is definitely a "try before you buy" option.



RATING



PRETTY MUCH POINTLESS

SCOOBY DOO EQUIVALENT→ Fred



Pluses

- Comfortable
- Adjustable sensitivity
- Excellent record of game support

Minuses

- Limited movement
- Daunting learning curve
- Not enough buttons

MAD CATZ PANTHER XL

Playing with a stick and a ball never felt so good

PRICE→ \$50.00 SRP

BUNDLE→ Demos including *Jedi Knight* and *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter*

Not surprisingly, the best first-person game controller (short of the mouse/keyboard combo) is also the least gimmicky. The Panther XL is simply a joystick and a trackball on one wide, ergonomic base.

It's extremely well built and functional, using the stick to move, and the trackball to look and has the shortest learning curve of any of the first-person shooter gizmos. In most games, the trackball's motion is proportional — if you turn it exactly 90 degrees to the right, your avatar rotates exactly 90 degrees. After toying with the trackball for an hour or two, the motion becomes second nature (I truly believe that the proportionality helps).

Functions such as shooting, changing weapons, jumping, and so on, can be neatly programmed into seven buttons (five around the trackball, two on the handle) and two POV hats. Each direction of the four-way POV hats can also be programmed as if it were a button. Rounding out the control accessories is a tiny throttle wheel placed just out of comfortable range of the left thumb.

As a plain joystick, it's not very useful in flight sims — the trackball just doesn't feel right as a rudder. However, using the stick to control the movement of the Mech/Herc/Gear of giant robot sims, or using the wheel to rotate the torso, feels so natural it's scary. Aside from the unappealing size (it's tough to fit it near a keyboard) it's the best alternative to the mouse/keyboard combo.



RATING



SLEEK AND SEXY

SCOOBY DOO EQUIVALENT→ Daphne



Pluses

- Accessible for mouse/keyboard users
- Very ergonomic
- Sturdy build

Minuses

- Massive footprint
- Limited use for the ball in non-FPS games

MICROSOFT ZULU

This upcoming first-person controller from the Evil Empire is modeled on the basic design of the Sidewinder pad. The device feels like a normal gamepad until you twist the right-hand side of the controller. This side controls your mouselook and aiming. The device was easy to learn and felt natural right off the bat.

However, when we tested a prototype version we did find a few problems in the design that we were told would most likely not change for the final version. The directional pad was a little large, which made direction changes difficult, and the mouselook control was not proportional, which made spinning around to shoot enemies very unintuitive. Remember, the controller is made by Microsoft, who has built a good track record for making high quality controllers. They may still be able to make the Zulu work.





THRUSTMASTER FRAG MASTER

Frag this horrifying waste of plastic

PRICE → \$59.99 SRP
BUNDLE → None

Let's put it simply: The Frag Master is the worst mistake ever made by Thrustmaster. It feels light and flimsy — totally uncharacteristic for a Thrustmaster device. It's meant to sit right in front of you and be used with two hands, so you'd better be able to program everything you'll be needing into its ten buttons.

The sloppy handle slides in every direction, twists left and right, and pivots back and forth. The idea is to simulate the movement of your character in a FPS. Sliding equals strafing, twisting is equivalent to rotating, and the back/forth pivot is supposed to replicate looking up and down. Unfortunately, it's damn near impossible to do any of those things with precision. The handle's movement is about as smooth as a payload, but not as graceful, and the slightest deviation from your attempted movement results in other, unplanned motions.

Try walking to the edge of a building and looking up with the bundled *Half-Life: Day One*. You're likely to end up moving forward

and over the precipice. I spent hours with the Fragmaster and achieved no more success with this piece of crap by the end than I did in the beginning.

The odds of support for upcoming titles look pretty grim. At press time in mid-March the most recent update on Frag-Master.com was posted on December 1, 1998. Even the novelty value can't save this thing from the scrap heap.

RATING 1



PURE AND UTTER CRAP

SCOOBY DOO EQUIVALENT → **Scrappy**



Pluses

- Um...
- Interesting color
- Well...

Minuses

- Cheap and clunky
- Uncomfortable feel
- Support is questionable

3M PRECISE MOUSING SURFACE

PRICE → \$11 SRP
BUNDLED → Uh, it comes in shrinkwrap

Scenario: You're in the midst of an intense round of *Tribes*. It's Capture and Hold, and the score is close. You're in a heavily damaged set of light armor defending a switch, and you've just watched two teammates die, victims of a heavy enemy onslaught. You're all by yourself now, against two of them — one of which is a heavy. Luckily, he's even more damaged

than you are. You're sure you can finish him with a disk and take out the other guy, just because you're an ass kicker. You've got the tactical advantage, too: You've just rocketed over the heavy's head and you're about to land behind him. You spin to target him...

Huh? Nothing happened!

You whack your mouse and spin to target — grr! You're not spinning! What the hell?

Oh, nevermind, you're dead.

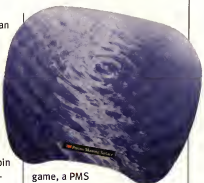
After closing the game in anger, kicking your desk, throwing things at the cat, etc, you look at your mouse. Beneath it, a single, tiny piece of unidentifiable fuzz is sitting on your mouse pad, right where the ball would have been. It's that little piece of fuzz that cost your team victory.

Now what do you do? Clean the mouse ball — again? Vacuum your foam mouse pad with the Dust-buster — again? Don't bother. Instead, go buy a 3M Precise Mousing Surface.

In any first-person shooter the ability to spin on a dime at the precise moment you move the mouse can be the difference between life and death. A fuzzed-up mouse pad can be a killer, so you need to make sure that a piece of lint doesn't come between you and glory.

The 3M Precision Mousing Surface feels like vinyl, but it's actually a space age super-plastic whose surface is actually made up of very small peaks and valleys. 3M claims that the mouse ball glides along the peaks, while dust falls down into the valleys, never again to trip you up in mid-game. It works.

If you're frequently blowing on your mouse pad and cleaning the ball to avoid getting caught motionless in the middle of a



game, a PMS (try not to snicker) is the most cost effective investment you can make. While it doesn't negate the necessity for regular maintenance — you still need to clean your balls — one of these pads will immediately make you feel like you've upgraded to some sort of super-mouse. The zippy, vinyl-esque feel of the pad takes a few minutes to get used to, but once you do, it's forever forgotten.

Priced at \$11, the 3M Precise Mousing Surface may cost more than most mouse pads, but over all it's the cheapest hardware upgrade for the biggest impact on your performance. It's a must-have for any serious FPS player.

RATING 9



PLAIN YET PERFECT

SCOOBY DOO EQUIVALENT → **Velma**



Pluses

- Delivers on its promise of precise mousing
- Nearly eliminates traction loss

Minuses

- Takes a few minutes to adjust to
- High price for a mouse pad
- No silicon breast-wrist thingy

HEAD TO HEAD

We tested all of the following devices head-to-head and discovered one thing. Aside from the Precision Mousing Surface, none of the following devices offered an improvement over typical mouse and keyboard control. Prepare to see more of these devices in the future and prepare to see a lot of bad ones. This just seems to be an arena that brings creativity out of people which sometimes means things get a little wild. We can't wait

	SPACEORB 360	PANTHER XL	FRAG MASTER	PRECISE MOUSING SURFACE
GRIP	One hand on buttons, the other on the orb	One hand on joystick, the other on a trackball	Double-fisted capacitive grip	It grips the mouse ball near perfectly
PRICE	\$59 SRP	\$50 SRP	\$59 SRP	\$11 SRP
NUMBER OF BUTTONS	Six	Seven (plus first switches)	Ten	None
LEARNING CURVE	Steep (30+ hours)	Short (3+ hours)	Impossible (Still not comfortable)	Purified (3 minutes)
GIMMICK	The pad with a ball	A stick and a trackball together	It's crap without the smell	Untapping pores
MOUSELOOK PERFORMANCE	Decent, but not perfect	Excellent, intuitive	Frustrating, pointless	Excellent — noticeably better
DOWNSIDE	Long learning curve	Takes up desk space	Everything	The \$11 price tag
LOOKS LIKE	Gamepad with a tumor	Multid joystick	Spaceship from Independence Day	A mousepad that went to MIT
NON-GAME USE	Back Massage	Prostate Massage	Drain Plug	Precision E-ting, Surface

DEMONSTRATION #2:

- 1 Tear out your old sound card.
- 2 Smash into pieces.
- 3 Toss over your shoulder.

► The sound those pieces make when they hit the ground all *around* you is the power of A3D from Aureal, the only audio that works the way your ears do.

That's why leading sound card vendors, such as Diamond, TerraTec, Turtle Beach, and Xitel, are using Vortex audio technology from Aureal, the only 3D audio accelerator that supports industry leading A3D positional audio technology.

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Go to <http://pcxl.ign.com/gaming411>: Product Number 20

VOODOO FEVER

The Voodoo 3 is finally here ...
is it really all that?



Even though it hasn't been all that long since the Voodoo 2 set a new standard for 3D accelerators, the debut of the Voodoo 3 seems like it has been a long time coming. Perhaps it's because 3Dfx's competition (namely Nvidia) has steadily improved, or because 3Dfx's oily marketing hype (including TV) appearances has raised expectations, or maybe it's just because we have been conditioned to expect 3Dfx to stay ahead of the pack. Whatever the case, we've been waiting anxiously for this chipset and it's finally here.

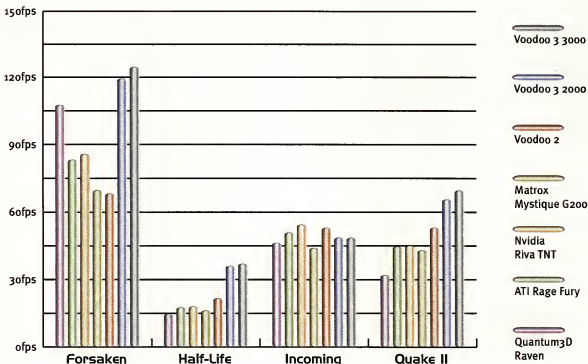
THE LOWDOWN

3Dfx has created three separate versions of its Voodoo 3 chipset: The V3 2000, 3000, and 3500. The variety is designed to make the chipset attractive to both OEM manufacturers (the 2000 option) looking for cheap technology, as well as hardcore gamers looking for a speed rush. The 2000 and 3000 are in stores now, while the 3500 will likely hit in June. All versions are 2D/3D solutions, as opposed to Voodoo 1 and 2's add-on format. We've only received the first two, but a full review of the 3500 will be in the magazine as soon as it arrives in our hot little hands.

THE BOARD	VOODOO 3 2000	VOODOO 3 3000
WHAT IT IS	The bargain alternative, not as fast as the 3000 or 3500, but a good, cheap solution	The middle ground, smack dab in-between the 2000 and 3500 in terms of price and performance
THE PRICE	\$129	\$179
THE SPECS	6 million triangles/second 286MegaTexel/second fill rate 143MHz Core Clock Speed 300 MHz RAMDAC (Memory speed)	7 million triangles/second 333MegaTexel/second fill rate 166MHz Core Clock Speed 100 billion operations per second 350 MHz RAMDAC (Memory speed)
THE MEMORY	16MB of SDRAM	16MB of SDRAM
THE SLOTS	PCI and AGP	AGP only

THE BENCHMARKS

THE TEST MACHINE: A PII 300 running on a 100MHz 440BX with 64MB SDRAM, running Win98 and DirectX 6.0. All scores represent frames per second at 800 x 600 resolution



HOW WILL IT PLAY ON MY LOW-END SYSTEM?

The Voodoo 3 chipset is CPU-dependent, so on lower-end systems you will not see a notable leap in performance over the current generation of 3D accelerators

HOW WILL IT PLAY ON MY HIGH-END SYSTEM?

The faster your system, the better performance you will get out of your V3 chipset

THE GOOD STUFF

THE SPEED

Currently, both boards offer the fastest 3D acceleration from a single board on the market (i.e. it's faster than the current first generation TNT 2D/3D cards). They are not as fast as a dual Voodoo 2 SLI configuration and they don't provide the best image quality, but if you want the current best performance for the best price, then Voodoo 3 is the right choice

THE 2D PERFORMANCE

The Voodoo 3 2D performance is excellent and supports crazy resolutions as high as 2046x1536 in Windows 98

THE DRIVERS

Voodoo 3 is essentially the final polished version of the Voodoo chipset. As such, the drivers are already spot-on and will continue to get better

THE SUPPORT

You can play almost any current 3D accelerated game on either of these boards. Support is not a major issue though newer games will start supporting the chipset specifically, and that will improve performance

THE BAD STUFF

TEXTURE MEMORY

Both boards can only display texture sizes up to 256x256. While this is not much of a problem in today's game market, it soon will be. When games (such as *Unreal Tournament* and *Quake III*, which you WILL be playing) start using larger textures, image quality won't be as crisp and clear as on the forthcoming TNT2's, which will allow (up to 2048x2048), or the texture compressed S3 Savage 4

COLOR DEPTH

Both boards will only display colors up to 16-bit color depth. Again,

games such as *Quake III* will utilize 32-bit color depths, and you won't be getting as high an image quality as on, say the forthcoming Matrox G400 or just about any of the other next generation of competitors

AGP 2X SUPPORT

Neither of the boards support AGP 2X bandwidth. Will this affect you? Not really. Since the Voodoo 3 limits its texture size and color depth, there is not much need for the high capacity texture shifting. But when games begin to use larger and larger textures, your performance will drop

THE FILL RATES

Texel (pixels that have been filtered)
Fill Rates of 3Dfx Boards

VOODOO3 - 3500	366Mtexels/s
VOODOO3 - 3000	333Mtexels/s
VOODOO3 - 2000	286Mtexels/s
VOODOO3 SLI	360Mtexels/s
VOODOO2	180Mtexels/s
BANSHEE	100Mtexels/s

THE COMPARISONS

COMPARED TO MY CURRENT VOODOO BANSHEE

Voodoo 3 2000

The Banshee has near the same 2D performance as the 2000, but the new board offers an impressive jump in 3D performance. Also, the 2000 will run games that feature multitexturing (such as *Quake II* and *Unreal*) much better than the Banshee

Voodoo 3 3000

Almost the same as the 2000, but you will get a slight (very slight on lower end systems) boost in 3D performance over the low end solution

COMPARED TO MY CURRENT VOODOO 2

Voodoo 3 2000 & 3000

The 3D performance of the Voodoo3 chipset is much better, so your main concern is the quality of your 2D card. If you are happy with your card, then another Voodoo 2 in SLI will give you the performance jump you are looking for

COMPARED TO MY VOODOO 2 SLI CONFIGURATION

If you are happy with your 2D card, stick with this configuration — it is faster than either board

COMPARED TO MY TNT CARD

Voodoo 3 2000

You will get a decent 3D performance jump, but it may not be enough to justify the investment. It also may be a good choice for those who are sick of not being able to play Glide-only games (which, by the way, are rapidly become extinct)

Voodoo 3 3000

Better jump in performance, but a higher price must be paid to get it. On a price per performance increase, the 2000 is a better buy

COMPARED TO THE COMING GENERATION OF COMPETITION

The Voodoo 3 should still be the fastest chipset in terms of sheer speed (if you choose to ignore Metabyte's TNT2 SLI system — which you should-n't). Once the dust has settled in the next generation of 3D cards, the battle will clearly be between speed and image quality. The TNT2 promises near (if not faster than) Voodoo 3 framerates with much better image quality, while the Savage 4 promises Voodoo 3 2000 performance with a better price, 32-bit color, and texture compression. We'll wait until they all hit stores before making our final choice — you should too

OVERALL

Voodoo 3 2000

At \$129, the 2000 is a great card for someone who wants a low cost option, with excellent 2D performance, quick 3D acceleration, and near universal support

Voodoo 3 3000

At \$179, the 3000 is a little less affordable, but offers all the other benefits of the 2000, as well as slightly better 3D performance

Voodoo 3 2000
RATING 8

Voodoo 3 3000
RATING 8



Shortly before press time, we heard the devastating news that two of our favorite stars of television, film, and print were made homeless. Yes, that famous duo, Huge Fake Left Breast and Huge Fake Right Breast, were recently evicted from their longtime home on the chest of VIP star, Pamela Anderson. We are eagerly watching to find out where they find a new home and when we can see them again dancing and bouncing with joy.

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chaos and mayhem would want to miss."

—Computer Games Strategy Plus



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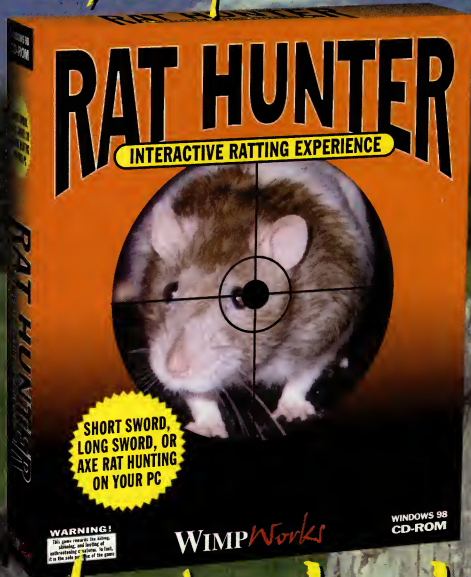

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PC Gamer
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Next Generation
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PC Action



WIMPWorks

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Bash ...



and Loot

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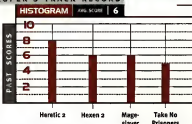
This game rewards the killing, skinning, and looting of anthropomorphic creatures. In fact, it is the sole purpose of the game.

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WINDOWS 98
CD-ROM

DEVELOPER'S TRACK RECORD



Soldier Of Fortune

When guns are outlawed, only *Soldier Of Fortune* readers will have guns

Snagging the license to the frighteningly popular mercenary magazine *Soldier Of Fortune* has to be one of the oddest deals I've ever encountered. It's certainly the first time a magazine license has been used for a game. (We refuse to acknowledge *Field & Stream* magazine's association

with Sierra's hunting and fishing franchises.) At PCXL we're all a little hurt that Raven didn't choose our magazine, but that's not important right now. What is important is that Raven's latest foray into the FPS genre (you may remember a couple of little games by the names of *Heretic* and *Hexen*) looks pretty damn special.

The *Quake II* engine isn't getting any younger, but Raven has added so many effects and modifications that the original code is barely recognizable. Detail and damage texturing, a new lighting system, a new weapon system, a new AI sys-

tem, full 32-bit texturing, a designer scripting language, a dynamic music system, fog — just a sampling of the (literally) hundreds of enhancements they've made. It's also worth noting that *SoF* will not have a software renderer (3D accelerator only, kids), which opens up a whole new realm of possibilities for gameplay and engine enhancement.

While all these additions go a long way towards petrifying *QII*'s overused drab format, the key enhancement is something those morbid developer types are calling *GHOUL*. The new feature ▶ p. 60

FIVE QUESTIONS

PACKERS VS. VIKINGS, DEVELOPER WARFARE, AND A PEEK INTO THE MINDS OF ERIC BIESSMAN, PROJECT LEAD, AND KENN HOEKSTRA, PROJECT ADMINISTRATOR.

Q: Are you working with a military strategist/consultant? If so, does he scare you in a "oh-shit-this-guy-could-kill-me-with-his-pinky" kind of way?

A: Activision considered sending a mercenary to Raven to offer some insight. We haven't seen any sign of him yet, but we're guessing that if he were here, we wouldn't know it. We have also been in contact with a respected spy-thriller writer to help create a more compelling single-player experience and more believable characters.

Q: If you could place a bet on a high-profile celebrity dying within the year, who would it be?

A: Every year I answer "Keith Richards" to this question. And every year he shows me that conventional weapons can't kill him.

Q: If you could hire a team of crack mercenaries to take out one company in this industry, who would get it?

A: I can't think of anyone I'd like to send "The A-Team" after right now. Maybe Valve, for all of the headaches that they have caused for other game developers — looks like they raised the bar for us all.

Q: As a Vikings fan I find this the least appropriate, yet most effective venue to say, "Packers suck!" Any response, cheesehead?

A: In the immortal words of Kenn Hoekstra, *SoF*'s project administrator, "Vikings swallow."

Q: Cheesehead? Fair assessment or comical misnomer?

A: It amazes me that a Vikings fan could come up with a big word like "misnomer." However, I'd say that Cheesehead is a fair assessment.



INFO BOX

DEVELOPER → Raven Software
PUBLISHER → Activision
RELEASE DATE → August '99
3D SUPPORT → Open GL, 3D card required

INTEREST GAUGE



THE HYPE

Unique gameplay, gory visuals, amazing animations, and a tie-in with the world's foremost mercenary magazine.

THE HURDLE

Realistic squad-based warfare is all the rage, so there is plenty of competition like *Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear*.

THE HIT

The *Quake II* engine and impressive *GHOUL* system just might snatch *R6*'s squad-based combat crown.



Making a mess of the environment is always a good time.



Soldier Of Fortune Gallery

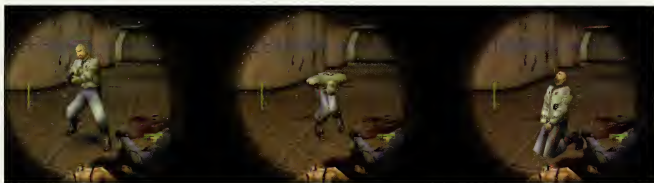


KEYS TO BEING A VIDEOGAME TERRORIST: Must have a menacing grimace, be cruel to harmless animals, have incredibly poor aim, and have an extraordinarily thick mustache. Resembling Saddam Hussein also helps.





(above and top) Real world locations, real weapons, and an unprecedented amount of thick red blood — sounds good to us. (below) Check out the colored lighting on this explosion, the transparencies in the smoke, and notice the reflection in the glass — never seen the *Quake II* engine do that before.



The GHOUL system makes for extremely specific targeting, damage, and reaction. So realistic, it almost hurts to watch.

► **P. 57** with the haunting acronym is basically an advanced model system that gives the developers an incredible amount of control over the game models and their animations. Eric Biessman, project lead for SoF,

describes it best, saying, "GHOUL allows for 26 different 'gore zones' that allow us to convey the effects of bullets and explosions on the human body. If you shoot an enemy in the groin, he will double over in pain and scream for his mother ... just like in real life! Or so I'm told ..." This level of combat detail is where SoF will really shine. While other games are just beginning to incorporate location specific damage, SoF is ready to take it to a new level. For example, in many forthcoming games you can shoot off someone's leg — pretty cool, right? In SoF you can shoot off someone's leg and watch as they squirm around on the floor screaming like a little baby, while trying to wrap their hands around what's left of their bloody stump. Really f—king cool.

The game is scheduled to include somewhere near 30 sin-

gle-player missions and at least eight multiplayer levels out of the box. Some original mission styles also caught our attention. In one level you have to track down a nuclear bomb being transported by train. You must carefully jump from car to car, avoiding a perilous fall; not to mention evade helicopter gunships opening fire and terrorists tracking you down. Some other missions include protecting prisoners while on a speeding boat, destroying a hidden chemical weapons plant, and taking out a terrorist training facility. The variety is impressive, especially considering that you can play as the good guy mercenary force or the drug-smuggling, nuke-stealing, bad guy.

The developers are quick to point out that while SoF is based on real world weapons and situations, the first order of business is

over-the-top action. The realistic damage of a *Rainbow Six* will be mixed with the superhuman powers of the *Quake* marine. Additionally, the gun experts at SoF magazine are supplying information on the most realistic collection of modern day weaponry that any game has seen.

Overall, SoF sounds great, but what worries me is that the ambitious levels and objectives can't be accomplished without major AI advancements. It's easy enough to fake alien AI and worlds, but trying to do real world environments and human interaction is a daunting task. If Raven can handle this challenge, then *Soldier of Fortune* could easily be one of the best games of '99.

— **MIKE SALMON** believes in the right to bare arms, as well as bare chests (on women, of course)

MAGAZINE GAMES



Basing games on magazines has opened up a whole new world of licensing. Here are a few other rags that are likely to get an interactive companion

HIGH TIMES
WHAT IT IS—Bob Marley walls in the background as players travel through the jamaican jungles finding bigger bong, better bud, and going on munchies runs
VERDICT—Unless the game is packaged with marijuana, its fan base would be too lazy or poor to actually buy it



PC ACCELERATOR
WHAT IT IS—Surf for porn, play Tribes, ridicule Burt, dye your hair blonde, and try finding new and creative ways to make fun of Ion Storm
VERDICT—We've been playing this game for over a year, and it rocks!



BARELY LEGAL
WHAT IT IS—This is a sprawling erotic fantasy adventure that puts you in a quest to find women that are "barely legal." Beware of fake IDs and live by one rule: If there's grass on the infield, play ball!
VERDICT—If they can get Natalie Portman to star, they've got our dollars



SMOKE
WHAT IT IS—A humidor-smuggling spectacular, where the player has to see it in and sell Cubans (cigars, not people)
VERDICT—Cigars have acquired a very negative connotation since that Monica busin:ss



Unique level settings like a moving train should make the missions in SoF very interesting.

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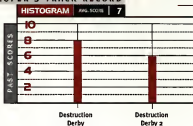


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Driver

Chitty-Chitty Bang-Bang, eat your heart out

The cops have spotted you. Your pickup is on the next block and you've gotta jet over there without being stopped by the boys in blue first. Hell, you can burn rubber later — the black and whites can't outpace your ride. You're an undercover cop, but they don't need to know that. And they're not going to find out until you crack the crime ring that's hired you. So, what do you do,



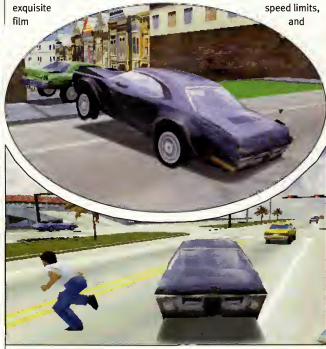
hotshot — what you gonna do? You drive, that's what.

As corny plots go, it's a good setup for a Playstation game, which is where *Driver* debuts in June before porting its way to the PC later this year. *Driver* promises to "recreate the adrenaline-pumping action of the best Hollywood car chases" (so says the GT marketing machine) by casting you as an undercover cop infiltrating a crime ring that spans New York, L.A., Miami, and San Francisco. After the nihilistic bent of games like *Carmageddon*, you'd think the industry was past forcing gamers into playing goodie-goodie characters at the expense of common sense. So, leading the police on dangerous car chases is okay as long as you're a cop yourself? Okay... if you say so.

Driver is really about recreating the "car chase," an exquisite film

tradition popularized in movies like *Bullitt*, but with you in the driver's seat. *Grand Theft Auto* had the right idea, but its 2D top-down perspective didn't remind anyone of Steve McQueen's knuckle-biting steering skills. *Driver* does, though, and may make you forget that you're playing a game at all. A special Director's Mode allows you to position cameras anywhere in the city and create their own high-speed chase scene. You may not win an Oscar for your work, but you won't need any shooting permits from the city, either.

The near photo-realistic graphics are what you notice first. The developers extensively filmed all four cities before converting their research into 3D models, making the game environment look like a living, breathing world. Civilian cars obey traffic laws, including working stop lights, speed limits, and



Pedestrians jump out of the way at the very last moment. Damn.

INFO BOX

DEVELOPER → R. R. Reflections Interactive
PUBLISHER → GT Interactive
RELEASE DATE → September '99
API SUPPORT → D3D

INTEREST GAUGE



THE HYPE

Driver uses the '70s-era cliché of the chase scene to energize a tired genre.

THE HURDLE

Full potential may not be realized if game yields to the limitations of being a PlayStation port.

THE HIT

Gritty realism and the ability to "film" your own chases make this the most anticipated driving game of the year.

DRIVING BUDDIES

The car flick is the manliest of cinematic gems, but some lack mass appeal. We've done some tinkering to make our favorites even better

DAISY RIDER

A shadowy flight into the dangerous world of a woman who does not exist, and the talking car that drives her around

SAMPLE DIALOGUE: → Miss Daisy: KITT... KITT, answer when I talk to you.

KITT: Miss Daisy, we must stop. My engine needs to "make water."
Miss Daisy: Don't be silly! Now, we're going to be late for my bridge club. You best activate Turbo Boost, y'hear?



THE DUQUES OF OELIVERANCE (sing along) "Jes' some good ol' hicks! Never measin' no harm/Jes wanna bugger Med Beatty the best way they know how..."

SAMPLE DIALOGUE: → Bo: Uncle Jesse says there's a chubby guy lost in the woods
Luke: Hot dang! Let's go get 'im!
Cletus: (on CD) Breaker One-Nine... hey, Duke boys, the ol' Possum Creek bridge is out.

Bo: Shucks, the feller's on the other side. Let's jump it!

SPORTS NIGHT OF RONIN

An ESPN-ish sports show produced entirely by masterless samurai, forced into the life of a wandering outlaw through the humiliation of their master's death

SAMPLE DIALOGUE: → Casey: What's in the case?

Dan: Casey? You mean this case?

Casey: Yes, that case

Dan: Here's the thing — if you don't

brake we're going to crash and I really

don't need that in my life right now

TOOTIE AND THE BANDIT

A young girl flees her boarding school

and gets mixed up with a macho smug-

gler in a black Trans Am

SAMPLE DIALOGUE: → Tootie: (whiny) Oh, if it ain't back by ten,

Mrs. Garrett is going to kill me.

Bandit: Can't right now, darlin'.

Smokey's on our tail (smacks gum)

Tootie: Do you think I look ugly in these

icky braces?

Bandit: Hang on to something hard,

honey... we're puttin' the pedal to the

metal! (smacks more gum)

FIVE QUESTIONS

AFTER MONTHS OF INCESSANT HOUNDING, SOME ANONYMOUS BRIT WHO ALLEGEDLY WORKS AT REFLECTIONS RESPONDED TO OUR EVER-FASCINATING FIVE QUESTIONS.

Q: Were any real-life car chases performed by the development team to ... err ... inspire them?

A: I can just see a police officer being understanding to our claims of research. Actually the police were not too helpful. Our script writer called the police department in one of the major U.S. cities and said "We're developing a game for the Sony ...". The officer interrupted him with "crime is no game, son," and actually put the phone down!

Q: Pedestrians jump out of the way when they see your car barreling towards them, which is a very cool feature. Is it possible to run one over. If so, what are the consequences?

A: There was never any intention to allow running over pedestrians. *Driver* was designed to be a close simulation of Hollywood car chases and I can't recall any films that featured mowing down bystanders (with the exception of *Death Race 2000*). We actually think it is more amusing to watch them dart out of the way at the last moment, especially if they were sitting at a cafe enjoying a cup of coffee! One thing to watch out for — look at their faces as they leap out of the way — they are looking at you.

Q: What motivated the creation of *Driver*?

A: Several years ago I was testing one of our earlier games, *Destruction Derby*, and started playing around at the crossroads. This led to the idea of real junctions with real traffic lights.

Q: General Lee vs. KITT from "Knight Rider" ... which would win and why?

A: The General Lee, easily. It has about twice the cubic inches, and even KITT is no match for Bo and Luke Duke. If KITT jumped 100 foot over an old broken bridge, that pile of junk would fall apart. But then again, so did the General Lee. If you watch the videos frame by frame!

Q: Are there any "unexpected features" that you decided to keep in the game?

A: Actually no — almost everything has turned out pretty much as designed. I think that *Driver* is probably the game which we are most pleased with, in terms of achieving everything we set out to do.



even turn signals, though it is possible for them to have accidents on their own. Half the fun is driving around and being a virtual tourist. Since I'm fairly new to the city of San Francisco, I did a little exploring and was shocked to discover a restaurant at which I've dined in real life. Unfortunately, an entire city is too much to scan into one map so there is a limit to where you can drive.

The visual quality almost perfectly captures the architecture of Victorian San Francisco, the yachts of Miami, the grungy slums of New York, and the splendor of Rodeo Drive. Granted, the cities are a little underpopulated by pedestrians, but there are a few who dive out of the way as your '70s muscle car (of which you have several choices) barrels down on them ... accidentally, of course. After all, you are a cop.

But before you begin to think *Driver* is akin to *Driver's Education '99*, there's a game here, too. As a driver for the mob (forget that cop thing, you'll feel better) you must make your pickup right on time — too early and you'll be chased by cops, too late and the mob will come after you instead. So, the idea is to make your pickup and

The flight model in *Driver* is on par with, if not better than, any flight simulator we've seen. Unfortunately, cars don't fly.

then make a clean getaway. A "felony meter" lets you know how many laws you've broken and how close you are to being noticed by the police. Bumping into another car (especially a police car) automatically gets you noticed (like, no shit), as does going the wrong way on a one-way street (though they might not be one-way in real life. Artistic license, y'know), crashing through fences, and driving through barriers.

Unfortunately, you can't make a run for it when caught or switch vehicles (so much for recreating a scene from *World's Most Dangerous Police Chases*). Right now, you can only steer and accelerate using the keyboard, but we're confident driving wheel and gamepad support will be added. If not, expect to hit lots of cars.

My sole concern as the game approaches completion is with the

physics engine. The car body physics are very realistic — bumpers crumple when hit, tires smoke, and hubcaps fly off when rounding corners too quickly. But, anyone who played *Destruction Derby II* might remember that the collision physics were a little ... umm ... exaggerated. Sadly, that seems to be the direction that Reflections is also taking *Driver*.

To retain a sense of drama, and because crashes using real physics looked comparatively dull, the elasticity of collisions are around 20% above normal — though I think that might be an understatement. Once, when struck by two squad cars at once, my virtual auto literally flew over a house ... and still survived to make a getaway.

Nevertheless, *Driver* may become the most realistic driving game ever made. When not flying through the air, this is the only game to ever make me feel like I was really driving — not a small accomplishment when you're steering with a keyboard.

—CHUCK OSBORN proudly points out that he has never gotten o driving ticket



Another beer run by the PCXL editors or an average day in the life of Rodney King? You decide.



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DEVELOPER'S TRACK RECORD

HISTOGRAM

JAN. 2000



PREVIOUSLY ON:

Back In September of '98 we took a probing look at this much-anticipated RTS sequel. Hopes were high, screens looked great, and the game was set to come out by Christmas. Subsequent delays have lessened our powerful yearning for C&C 2, but Red Alert has kept us jonesing. WE WANT THIS GAME.

C&C: Tiberian Sun

It's a quantum leap back to the future

Next to *Quake II* and *Tribes*, C&C: *Red Alert* is the most-played multiplayer game in the PCML office. At three years old and without any 3D-accelerated effects, that's saying a lot about its appeal. (Five hour matches are not unheard of around here.) So, the editors have been waiting — impatiently — for C&C: *Tiberian Sun*'s release. Our first preview of the game was way back in our inaugu-

ral September '98 issue, as the game was supposed to be released last fall. In fact, the last line was "Let's hope it ships on time." As you may have noticed, it didn't.

The new release date is set for June 1999 (or right around the time you read this), but don't be surprised if it gets pushed back a little more. The latest build we saw was missing many animations and features, with sound and AI issues still to be ironed out. Is it annoying that

it's taken so long to get our new C&C fix? Certainly ... but not, as *StarCraft* fans will tell you, if the end product is exceptional.

The abridged version of the plot is this: *Tiberian Sun* is the sequel to the original C&C. After 20 years, war (and more Tiberium than you can shake a scintillation counter at) has left the Earth devastated. The Brotherhood of NOD has gone underground (as in, really underground) following Kane's death and fragmented into splinter factions. GDI is busy moving the remaining populace away from the deadly Tiberium-infested areas to the Antarctic. But evil supervillains never really die, they just wait around 20 years before wreaking havoc all over again. In addition, The Forgotten, a neutral non-playable mutant race, have a say

in the war efforts. Treat them right and they'll provide technology unavailable elsewhere.

You play Commander McNeill, who in turn is played in FMV cutscenes by Michael Biehn (the guy who isn't Arnold Schwarzenegger in *The Terminator*). Also appearing as General Solomon is the voice o' Darth Vader himself, James Earl Jones, along with the original Kane (and Westwood employee), Joe Kucan.

Graphically, the game looks great, with realtime lighting effects and a 3D voxel world (far more detailed than *Red Alert*'s 2D pixelated terrain), but not so radically changed that it will be unfamiliar to longtime C&C fans. But there is more of everything. There are now night missions that make the lighting effects an integral part of gameplay. If your base wants to guard against spies, set up searchlights to ferret out intruders — but protect them well or it's "lights out," not only for your troops, but on-screen as well.

Apparently the weather has gotten totally out of hand in the future, since you not only have to contend with rain and snow, but also poisonous gas-spreading winds, thunderbolt-inducing ion storms, and punishing meteor showers. The environment is no longer just "there," it's another potential enemy all its own. Want to drive your tanks over that frozen river? Send a new Hover MRLS. Instead, or be prepared to lose one or two as they fall through the ice.

Luckily, you do have some control over the environment. In fact, you can terraform it using an ion cannon (go ahead and destroy some enemy units, too), which can create deep craters in the landscape, delaying any units walking through the area. Bridges ▶ p. 67



INFO BOX

DEVELOPER → Westwood Studios
PUBLISHER → Westwood Studios
RELEASE DATE → June '99
API SUPPORT → Nada

INTEREST GAUGE



THE HYPE

Red Alert sold big. *Tiberian Sun* is waaaaay overdue so fans are frothing at the mouth for another C&C fix.

THE HURDLE

The success of *StarCraft* has left Westwood the unenviable task of playing catch-up in a saturated market.

THE HIT

Never underestimate the power of a franchise name that's infiltrated the fabled mass market.

Uncle Jesse says the bridge is out. Guess we're gonna have to jump it. Yee-haaaaw!!!



ON THE BATTLEFIELD



THE HOMEFRONT



FIVE QUESTIONS

AFTER A RUN THROUGH THE TIBERIAN PATCH, PRODUCER RADE STOJSAVLEVIC AND DESIGNER ADAM ISGREEN ANSWERED THESE FIVE ASTOUNDINGLY STUPID QUESTIONS.

Q. What's with the Tiberian/Tiberium thing?

A. Someone on the team who once went to school and didn't sleep through English class determined that "Tiberium" was a noun. So, since the sun really isn't made out of Tiberium, we needed an adjective in order to make it work, thus the word "Tiberian."

Q. Was there any concern that the gameplay may become too complicated for its own good?

A. This has been a nagging item for the development team from the start. One of our goals with C&C has been to keep the mechanics of the game simple and easy to learn, but with a lot of depth. We've spent a significant amount of time on this with *Tiberian Sun* in order to make sure that the game is still as fun as the original, while providing the improvements fans demand.

Q. Was there anything that got left out of the game that you can tell us about?

A. From the design side, we've had to trim back or alter a couple of units. The scavenger was originally planned to be a NOD unit that would piece together parts from destroyed vehicles in order to come up with new ones. If you had him, you could piece together a GDI Disruptor and a NOD stealth tank to make a sonic tank that could cloak. We wound up cutting the unit because of balancing and Interface issues.

Q. How many units do you expect to ship?

A. If we don't sell at least one million we'll all be looking for new jobs. [Ed. — *Can't Westwood just find a green money crate? Wait ... you mean that doesn't happen in real life? Damn ...*]

Q. Does Tanya make a reappearance?

A. Tanya doesn't reappear in *Tiberian Sun*. GDI's policies don't jibe with Tanya's "kill everything that annoys her" philosophy, so they parted ways. I believe she's running guns in South America with Juan Valdez.



Like shootin' fish in a barrel ... on a bridge ... with a tank.

► p. 65 can be blown up or even rebuilt as long as you have a field engineer. And pity the poor city-dwellers of the future, whose buildings can be reduced to rubble in seconds by laser cannons. The ultimate new way to utilize your surroundings is arguably the biggest new addition to the game — underground burrowers. Not only do you have to defend from attacks by sky and land, but also subterranean threats from tunneling units that pop up in your base and take out defenses. There aren't any water units in *Tiberian Sun*, but these mecha-gophers could prove to be just as deadly (and cheap).

Tiberium, in its natural state or as a weapon, must be avoided. Not only lethal, it now mutates your soldiers into mobile goo-zombies that attack their old comrades. A new, highly-volatile blue variety explodes when shot or just whenever the hell it feels like. Tiberium can serve you in two ways, however, as weapons or for healing NOD cyborgs. Not completely defenseless, the GDI is in

command of the "they'd-call-them-Mechs-but-don't-want-to-get-sued" armored units. Another new long-range NOD attack is a Tiberium-tinged plant that can be blasted into enemy territory where it will spread and become a general nuisance. As a typically balanced counterpoint, the GDI is equipped with a Tiberium clearer to handle such matters.

While the interface remains the same, how you handle troops and units does not. Finally, you can queue the building of units, freeing you to focus on combat. Sounds good, but use this feature unwisely and you might end up with an overabundance of light infantry and little money leftover to build a tank rush. However, the most overdue innovation is the ability to set up waypoints (a la *Rainbow Six*), sending units from skirmish to skirmish or sneaking them into enemy territory via a protracted route. Still, critics (Ed and Mike, for instance) may feel these modifications take the "real time" out of real-time strategy.

Nevertheless, *Tiberian Sun* will shine brightly. Let's hope it ships on time.

— **CHUCK OSBORN** says his post-apocalyptic future is so bright, he's gotta wear shades

LEGENDS OF FMV

In the last *TS* preview, we took a look at bad actors and their FMV careers. This time, we focus on formerly-laud-of-theorians who were lured by an easy FMV paycheck.

MALCOLM McDOWELL STARRED IN: The Kubrick-directed classic *A Clockwork Orange* and the Guccione-produced *Caligula*. **CONTRIBUTION:** Surfaced as Admiral Tolwyn in *Wing Commander III* and *IV* (but earns kudos for not appearing in the dreadful movie).



JAMES EARL JONES STARRED IN: The Kubrick-directed classic *Dr. Strangelove*; the Star Wars series. Won a Golden Globe and was Oscar-nominated for *The Great White Hope*. **CONTRIBUTION:** Voiceover work in *Under A Killing Moon*; will play General Solomon in *C&C: Tiberian Sun*.

SIR RICHARD ATTENBOROUGH STARRED IN: *Jurassic Park* and *The Last World*. Directed *Ghandi*, which won eight Oscars. **CONTRIBUTION:** Reprised John Hammond role in *Troposper* ... as a disembodied voice.

MICHAEL YORK STARRED IN: *2001: A Space Odyssey*; *Romeo & Juliet*; *Cobalt*; *Logan's Run*. **CONTRIBUTION:** Portrayed J. Saint Gideon in *Tex Murphy: Overseer*.



Finally ... C&C has colors besides green and brown.



Federal law now mandates big explosions in all RTS games.

PAST SCORES

10
9
8
7
6
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4
3
2

PREVIOUSLY ON SLAVE ZERO

Accentuating the sense of scale was a primary focus of this game that puts you in the role of a mammoth, 60-foot, mechanized ass-kicking machine. The importance of its anime-inspired origins appears to have waned, but the graphical power and pure explosive action quotient has taken over. It will be important to get across the feeling of piloting a nimble but gargantuan hunk of metal on a destructive orgy.

Slave Zero

When you're 60-feet tall, everyone calls you "Sir"

A futuristic, anime-inspired setting is not completely original, but has yet to be done to death like the post-apocalyptic or future-gothic settings that have become gaming staples over the last couple of years. By pitching you into the midst of a mammoth battle, dominated by a new cyborg killing machine, *Slave Zero*



has already garnered some deserved attention. With 15 missions approaching completion, the city is coming alive in a dark, architecturally unbelievable, and ultimately impressive style.

It's at this late stage in the development cycle that has spanned some two years, that *Slave Zero's* personality is beginning to emerge. Evidently, there's not a whole lot more to this big mech action game than big mech action — and that's just fine.

From our beta build that showcased several missions, it was evident that *Slave Zero* is, at heart, an incredibly straightforward game. There are few wide open spaces, as befits a sprawling, towering metropolis that looks like the nightmare creation of a *Blade Runner* production designer. In any city, it's hard to feel agoraphobic when you're 60 feet tall. In fact, as you make your way to the upper echelons of SI-9 to a final explosive showdown with the evil dictator Sovkhan, who runs this mile-high smog-fest, *Slave Zero* almost feels claustrophobic.

As you clamber up civilian-packed roadways, each mission follows a fairly linear path. Diversions are generally dead-ends or dangerous precipices where one wrong step will send you tumbling

off the edge and on a long treacherous freefall to oblivion. I thought that this might be a problem, but it's not. And I'll tell you why (cuz I'm like that). It's because there's so damn much going on around you within the confines of the plotted path, that it's easy to forget that you're being shepherd.

Aside from the Sentinel enemies, the Lancers (who place

impregnable shields and wait for you to make the aggressive move), and the lesser Slaves thrown in your path, a myriad of more conventional military might — tanks, jet planes and helicopters — keep your attention focused on the trigger finger. Swatting hovering choppers from the sky with aplomb is nearly as much fun as the much-vaunted ability to pick



Big slaves, big weapons, big exposures ... just big.

INFO BOX

DEVELOPER → Accolade
PUBLISHER → Accolade
RELEASE DATE → June 1st '99
API SUPPORT → D3D, Glide

INTEREST GAUGE



THE HYPE

One public demo has alerted gamers to the massive robot. An exclusive demo on the PCXL CD will confirm its potential.

THE HURDLE

Getting a genuinely compelling game amongst the special effects, explosions, and destruction. It must have a context.

THE HIT

Details are being added to make the city appear more "alive." Final tweaks based on mass feedback should help.



FIVE QUESTIONS

MATT POWERS, PRODUCER ON SLAVE ZERO, JOINS US AGAIN TO DISCUSS RHYTHM, ATTRACTIVE ROBOTS, AND THE APPROXIMATE DAMAGE CAUSED BY A FLYING HUMAN.

Q: Since you continually stay in one city, how are you making sure that subsequent missions have a different look and feel to keep the player interested?

A: There are six very different art sets that correspond to the six areas of the city — the lower city (Industrial), middle city (financial district), upper city (cloud city), sewer system, military sector, and the palace. Each mission has its own varied look, even between missions that take place in the same sector of the city.

Q: All those buildings, all those windows... any Easter Eggs, should you decide to halt the carnage and peek in to see what the citizens are up to?

A: Many of the buildings can be destroyed. They hold goodies like power-ups or weapons. Buildings can leave behind places that can be used as clubs, or thrown at an enemy.

Q: How much damage does a person do when flung at an enemy? And a car?

A: We are still in the process of tuning the various degrees of damage caused by cars, people, girders, pipes, etc. Obviously throwing a person isn't going to cause as much damage as, say, a rocket launcher. However, we do want these pick up and throw items to do a considerable amount of damage in order to motivate people to use them (especially if they are low on ammo).

Q: Would you consider yourself a Slave to the Rhythm?

A: Absolutely!

Q: It's a fight: A Slave versus a Mech versus a Gear versus a Herc. Who wins?

A: Basing my decision upon speed, agility, weapons, a brawl/fight to the death, I need to pick Slave Zero. Talent competition? Slave Zero again. Slave Zero can stomp, pick up, throw, hang, hoist, jump. A beauty competition — Slave Zero hands down. That sleek physique, deep set brow, stem chin — a real looker. Star Search or Cage Match, Slave Zero wins the fight.

A futuristic face-off, these two will cause way more damage than Cage and Travolta.

up pedestrians and cars and use them as weapons (or make messy stains on any available building). You can smash small (three story) buildings with a swipe, stomp the ground and cause a shockwave that sends cars hurtling in to the air, or crack masonry and add to the already cacophonous din. It's enough to make you forget that there's not a deep story line to uncover here.

It's not all simple destruction though, as it becomes evident that Slaves are made of three components — dark matter, Slave embryo and endoskeleton. Pre-

venting Sovkhan from getting these pieces is as important as destroying his minions. To that end, protecting a convoy from various attacks (where, for once, you're not the target), is a pleasant change of direction. With seven mini-bosses to face, strategy has also been added by allowing the Slave to carry only three weapons (one in hand, on the shoulder, and on the back). That means you must choose between the 12 weapons as you discover them on your journey.

Many of the little details currently being added will make that journey an even more memorable experience. Floating neon advertising ships, passive commercial vehicles caught in the crossfire, flickering signs, and towering buildings create a compelling atmosphere. The lighting effects are already very impressive, the explosions are big, bold, and colorful, and the pure action quotient is nearing the top of the scale.

There may be few important life lessons to be learned through the course of Slave Zero's march, but you can be pretty sure that there's going to be a vast trail of destruction in its wake.

— Judging from this preview, ROB SMITH is apparently paid by the syllable



The sleek silhouette, the finely-tailored metallic hems ... Slave Z is also a slave to fashion.

SLAVE ZERO
VS.
SLAVE I

Slave Zero

The battle is on: Boba Fett's ship versus the giant mechanized marauders from Slave Zero

NUMBER OF
FROZEN HAN SOLOS ON BOARD
Slave Zero: 0 Slave One: 1

NUMBER OF
BAD-ASS BOUNTY HUNTER PILOTS
Slave Zero: 0 Slave One: 1

NUMBER OF
RUN INS WITH BILLY D. WILLIAMS
Slave Zero: 0 Slave One: 1

NUMBER OF CHILDREN
WHO DIE PLAYING WITH SPRING-
LOADED ACTION FIGURE
Slave Zero: 0 Slave One: 1

VERDICT

As is evident by the names and all the worldly research PCL could conduct, Slave One is definitely one better than Slave Zero



Slave I



World Wars

Mortal Enemies

Shot at Survival



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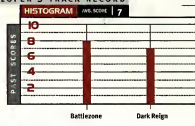


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DEVELOPER'S TRACK RECORD



Battlezone 2

Tanks for the memories (har har har)

A lot of sequels these days seem more like reincarnations. After posting decent sales numbers, a game disappears from shelves, sinks back into the game gene pool, and is reborn a year or so later as an upgraded version of the original. Not upgraded so much that you can't recognize the original, but enough that you're willing to pay another 50 bucks for

it. That's what Activision's hoping is gonna happen with *Battlezone 2*, the reincarnation of last year's critical darling, commercial disappointment, and retro name rebirth, *Battlezone*. Since it's essentially an RTS that you play in first person while shooting things, it's combining two of the most popular genres into something that fans of both should love—in theory. The reality is that *Uprising* and *Battlezone*

sold miserably (and *Urban Assault* even worse) and only the gaming press seemed to care about the hybrid genre.

The first upgrade in *Battlezone's* next life seems to be improved graphics — and how. The textures on the tanks look incredible, and the bright, vibrant world in which the action takes place is a clear enhancement on the dark, stark worlds of the first one. "The graphics engine was completely rewritten in order to support our goal of creating lively, eye-popping

worlds," says project director George Collins. "Some of the new things it can do include realtime lighting (which will allow for both day and night missions), and multi-texturing (for more varied and natural-looking worlds)."

Another good karma improvement is the unit AI, for both friendlies and enemies. They will use all the weapons, including mines, mortars, and cannons, and will also make evasive maneuvers such as strafing and jumping. But will this make the steep learning



INFO BOX

DEVELOPER → Pandemic Studios
PUBLISHER → Activision
RELEASE DATE → Late summer
API SUPPORT → Direct 3D, Glide

INTEREST GAUGE



THE HYPE

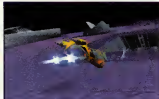
It's like the first *Battlezone* except with more stuff, and better graphics.

THE HURDLE

Although critically praised, not many buyers seemed to embrace the concept of the original. Will gamers buy into BZ2?

THE HIT

The larger gamer population may catch on if Pandemic makes the strategy accessible for grunt-like first-person shooter fans.



When you have to pick between the flying tank and the thing that looks like a Mech, go with the bigger cliché.

FIVE QUESTIONS

PANDEMIC'S GEORGE COLLINS SPOKE WITH US ON SUCH TOPICS AS SMILING PITCHMEN IMPALED ON CAR RADIO ANTENNAS, BREAKDANCING, SEEING INTO THE FUTURE, AND SHAMELESS SELF-PROMOTION.

Q. Which game at this year's E3 made the biggest impression on you (I know it hasn't happened yet, but this is our E3 issue so please bear with us).

A. *Dark Reign II* made my knees weak.

Q. Please tell us you're not calling this game *Battlezone: Arena*.

A. We were actually thinking of *Battlezone II: Electric Boogaloo*.

Q. Of all the fast food mascots out there, who's your favorite?

A. I like Jack from Jack in the Box. He reminds me of Josh (Resnick, president of Pandemic Studios).

Q. Who would win, UConn or the LA Clippers?

A. Wow, given the Clippers 3-29 record, that's a tough one. They did just beat Utah though...

Q. How many staff members planning on camping out for tickets for *Star Wars*?

A. We are still camping out for *Wing Commander* tickets.

SEEING THE FUTURE



E3 Extra: Extra Expectations

PCCL'S GUIDE TO E3: A FOND LOOK BACK

This boxout was actually written after E3 and transported back in time in a sealed envelope to make it into the issue

(Note: Game names have been censored for legal reasons)

DAY 1:
9:00 AM: We're all completely excited to be here. All the games, all the beer, all the booth babes! Get out the metallic business cards and bring it on!
1:00 PM: Man, [blank] looks like total shit! What were they thinking?
2:00 PM: The booth babe at [blank] is totally hot! Must get her number...
3 PM: Meeting with big-shot producer to show [blank] which won't be released for another two years
5:00 PM: I can't remember a goddamn thing I saw today. Which way to the bar?
8:00 PM: Get rejected by the booth babe. Ah, she wasn't that hot anyway
2:00 AM: Pass out

DAY 2:
12:00 AM: Shit, slept through the first four meetings of the day
1:00 PM: Okay enough with the fans telling us how much the magazine rocks. Don't they like, know we don't give a shit? We appreciate it, but enough already. Note to self: Must escape incessant pounding techno beat immediately
3:00 PM: [Blank] looks like complete shit
4:00 PM: We aren't they showing [blank] last year? It looks exactly the same!
5:00 PM: I found it! The sleeper hit game of the show that no one else will know about or realize how great it is! Now my presence down here is justified! Who woulda thought — it's [blank]!
7:00 PM: Scored the invite to the invite to the invite to the Sony party, woo hoo!
4:00 AM: Pass out

DAY 3:
3:00 PM: Barely have enough strength to write ... must hold back from throwing on PR slave — just one more meeting...
5:00 PM: Bodily functions shutting down, one by one, as symptoms of malnutrition, dehydration, and syphilis set in
6:00 PM: Pass out

DAY 4:
7:00 AM: Sleep through scheduled return flight
10:00 AM: Still sleeping
12:00 PM: Actually, this might be more like "passed out"
1:00 PM: Maid knocks on door and says "Get the hell out, hippie!"
2:00 PM: Get to airport, come up with lame excuse for being seven hours late (something like, "man, the traffic")
3:00 PM-11:00 PM: Wait for next flight
12:00 AM: Board flight home



The alternate timeline in *BZ2* takes place during the '60s. I want my flying car, dammit! It's not official the '60s until there are flying cars.

curve of the first *BZ* that much steeper? Says Collins, "Once we made the AI that tough to fight, we realized we were also going to need dumber opponents for the new players. So we added an experience system, so that the units can get smarter as they get more experienced. You start getting attached to your veteran units."

The single player game will be the usual linear sequence of missions, but with some branches based on your actions and decisions. Beginning as a member of a secret force charged with protect-

ing the Earth, the story evolves with increasing conflict. The plot continues along the alternate reality of a secret space war between the U.S. and the Soviets during the Cold War. *BZ2* picks up when peace was abruptly ended by a sudden attack on the International Space Defense Forces on Pluto. Uh huh ...

Defending against the threat is the first task, but you'll also begin to uncover secrets of the past. Okay, but packing what kind of hardware? "Actually some of the defensive devices look the coolest," says Collins. "My favorite

weapons are the shields, because the lighting and translucent effects look cool. I also think the morphing camouflage is dramatic." Multi-player options now include the inevitable teamplay mode, while retaining the deathmatch and strategy modes from the first game.

Given *BZ*'s dismal sales, Pandemic and Activision are hard at work, making *BZ2* more accessible. A big part of that work is toning down the complexity of the game and straightening out the learning curve.

"We don't want to assault the player with a number of technical interfaces immediately. The learning curve will be more gradual," Collins confirmed. Maybe this around, this game will get the attention it deserves.

— ED LEE is sick of writing bios and is hard at work thinking of a way to get out of it



Bill the astronaut is lost on the planet of undulating texture maps.

For years, gamers on tight budgets have had to resort to buying their PCs from the huge, impersonal business system manufacturers that don't know jack about gaming.

Glad that's over with.



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Mediocrity

Since gaming editors get all their games for free, it's easy for them to overlook the consumer (that'd be you) when handing out review scores. But at PCXL we consciously think about the tough choices you must make everytime you buy a game. These games cost \$50 minimum, and that ain't cheap. To this end we have a firm policy of not accepting mediocrity. It's just too damn easy to slap a 7 on a game and say it's passable. What use is that to you? None. If a game is great, we'll break all the rules, hand out an 11, and praise the very box it comes in. But if it's shit, we will continually, constantly, and brutally abuse it. We do this for you (and it can be pretty damn fun for us, too).



Recoil: The definition of mediocrity.

KILLER GAME

Any game that receives a 9 or so from our rigorous scoring system warrants this lofty logo. If you see the PC ACCELERATOR Killer Game stamp, you know it's a game worth buying. Only the true classics deserve this elite status, so don't expect to see this symbol often.



SUICIDE

If we're going to create a stamp for the truly great, then it's only fair to label the unforgivable, too. It takes an abominable score of 1 or 2 to qualify for the abuse around the neck. Stay away from these games at all costs.



CRITICAL ADD-ONS >>

Whenever a joystick, soundcard, or other computer accoutrement improves a game, we'll stick a corresponding logo on the review. We include only those devices that make the game better; just being compatible isn't good enough. If you don't see the logo, then that particular add-on doesn't do much for the game.



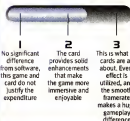
ACCELE-RATED >>

This additional rating provides specific information on how a game performs on a variety of competing 3D chipsets. We test games on up to four major 3D cards and report back with the true test for any 3D accelerator: how it affects the game. We base these ratings on graphic enhancements, framerates, and performance to give you a good idea of how a game will perform on your 3D card.

(Note: Performance may vary depending on the card and the setup of your system)

ACCELE-RATED

CHIPSET



RATINGS >>

Our rating scale is a simple 1 to 10 — no decimal points, no obscure percentages, just a straight score that gets right to the point. Before we score games, they undergo countless hours of testing on different systems, with different 3D cards — our reviewers even play the games under the influence of various narcotics. In the end we stamp a single score on the game, which is essentially a numeric value of the game's worth. We love games and always try to look on the bright side, but when a pile of steaming crap comes in, we won't hold back and allow our readers to waste their money on said crap. You can count on our reviews for honesty, insight, and maybe even a few laughs.

GRAPHICS

Rendering quality, framerates, and special effects all contribute to an immersive gaming experience.

SOUND

Visceral sound effects and appropriate music can help make a good game great.

DEPTH

How often you find yourself playing a game, and how long, are good indicators of its quality.

DESIGN

The backbone of a game is the overall vision behind it, from characters and weapons to levels and missions.

RATING



CUT THE CRAP

Since we focus our coverage on fast-paced games, we don't get a chance to review every PC game that comes out. But in just a few words, we can tell you everything you need to know about the games we didn't review and cut out all the crap.

GAME	INSIGHT
North vs. South	Enough already with the Civil War sims
Dark Side Of The Moon: Deluxe Edition	The Dark Side Of Ass Deluxe DVD Crapthology
Creatures 2	Nurturing = yuld
Hardball 6: 2000 Edition	New rosters, same crap game

WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN

- Flawless. Perfect. Better than that sex dream with Drew Barrymore and Natalie Portman **(10)**
- A true classic. An excellent game that is well worth the money **(9)**
- A great game, but may feature a few minor flaws that are easily overlooked **(8)**
- A good, solid game that lacks the inspiration or vision of a truly great game **(7)**
- A game that rises above the average (barely) due to a hook in style or gameplay **(6)**
- The definition of mediocrity, this game doesn't commit any major crime other than being ordinary **(5)**
- A game that doesn't exactly suck, but probably won't hold your interest for long **(4)**
- OK, maybe there's an element of redeeming value in this game, but it still sucks **(3)**
- Very little of interest, this game is deeply flawed and should be avoided **(2)**
- Extreme Bullrider, Extreme Paintbrawl, Extreme Tennis — extreme amounts of ass **(1)**

DEVELOPER →	Totally Games
PUBLISHER →	LucasArts
REQUIRED →	P200, 32 MB RAM, 4X CD-ROM, 133MB hard drive, joystick
IDEAL →	PII 450, 128 MB RAM, 8X CD-ROM, 275MB hard drive, 3D accelerator card

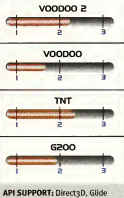
X-Wing: Alliance

The whole is less than the sum of its parts

JOYSTICK

ACCELE-RATED

The game was designed to take advantage of Direct3D, but there is native Glide support as well. Higher polygon counts for the ships, as well as hardware mipmapping is supported.



It doesn't take a genius to know how much Star Wars kicks ass, how it's the best movie, with the best characters, and the best spaceships, etc. Up to now, though, the Star Wars games have been a mixed bag — the good (*Jedi Knight*, *TIE Fighter*), the bad (*Rebellion*, *Rebel Assault*), and the ugly (*Ewoks Adventure*). Another great one called *X-Wing* brought the first-ever simulation slant to the cool spaceships of the Star

Wars universe. It was followed up by the almost legendary *TIE Fighter*, but then the disappointing multiplayer *X-Wing vs TIE Fighter*. And now comes the third sequel that plays a lot like the original *X-Wing*, but with much better graphics. Actually, now that I think about it, that's exactly what *Alliance* is like.

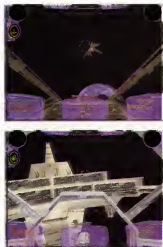
This is both a good and bad (but not necessarily ugly) thing. Good, because the familiar simplicity of the control scheme is exactly the

same as previous games. But it's bad because the basic gameplay (defend one ship, blow up another, identify a third) is getting seriously tiresome. Larger scale battles, different mission objectives, and more ships are all fine and dandy (and what developers Totally Games have now included), but it still doesn't change the fact that you're outgunned, outnumbered, and trying to do everything at once — and, worst of all, you still can't clone yourself.



Not much to work with here, so... Did we mention we hate Ewoks?

The X-Wing — what a great design. Even when standing still, it looks like it's moving.



So there's a great instant "wow" factor with the cool 3D accelerated graphics (with resolutions as high as your card can support), including much more detailed models and textures, virtual cockpits, and other cool stuff. There's also a new "space pirate" twist, whereby your character starts out as a member of a merchant family



You've got your Bad MF, which can make the Kessel run under 12 parsecs. What the hell does that mean exactly, especially since a parsec is a unit of distance, not time?

before (predictably and boringly) joining the Rebellion. These family missions involve stuff like picking up and moving cargo, intercepting thieves after your stash, etc. But after a few missions, the old "fail

mission, grit teeth in rage, repeat" syndrome starts and the stress inducing begins.

The developers could've avoided this stress by making each mission, regardless of outcome, affect the greater campaign, rather than forcing you to repeat them. (To be fair, they let you skip up to three missions.) A dynamic structure, whereby flying the mission over again was optional rather than mandatory, would've been much more compelling. This would have helped the story development side of things, and made the player feel more connected to what was going on, which is definitely a good, very Star Wars-y idea.

Multiplayer is here too, and it's a slightly improved version of the *X-Wing* vs. *TIE Fighter* setup. Each player picks their ship, and enters the fray with a squad backup or deathmatch style. You can add capital ships and stations to the mix, and assign them as objectives for different flight groups. The game can handle up to eight players on a LAN, and two over modem. You can also play in the Internet Gaming Zone if you like to play large-scale battles.

The Bad MF will now get its own paragraph, as flying this thing is one of the main selling points of the game. And you get to fly it in both single player and multiplayer, as well as the last mission of the game (the final space battle from *Return of the Jedi*). What's cool about it is the laser turrets that will fire on their own, taking out any nearby enemies, while you fire the front laser. Or you can



You've got the Y-Wing, best known for getting blown up.

jump into the turrets and fire them yourself. Way cool.

It was very painful to avoid the trap of reviewing the sweet, sweet Star Wars license instead of the actual merits of the game. But that's what I did, and what I played was pretty discouraging, considering how much time they've had since the first *X-Wing* to actually create something new and interesting from a gameplay point of view. But why argue with sales numbers, right?

—ED LEE was originally up for the part of *Boba Fett*, but *Lucas* didn't feel a two year-old was right for the part

GRAPHICS

Well done, with crisp textures and special effects, although it did stutter a bit at 1024 x 768.

SOUND

The usual impeccable array of sound effects that we've come to expect from LucasArts, and music taken right from the movies. Music in this game is particularly well done.

DEPTH

Fifty single player missions, and multiplayer will keep you busy if you have the inclination to build your own skirmishes.

DESIGN

A classic case of good individual elements that don't add up to an overall good game.

RATING

+ Pluses

- Star Wars
- Easy to learn
- Cool Death Star mission

- Minuses

- The same gameplay as before
- With the same flaws
- Changes and improvements are mostly on the surface

BAD CAREER MOVES



Think back what you were doing so many years ago. If you were an aspiring actor roaming around Hollywood casting couches, the prospect of starring opposite an overgrown orangutan and a cast of midnets probably didn't sound that great. Although these celebs aren't doing too bad, they are some of the actors who passed on *Star Wars* for other crap.

CHRISTOPHER WALKEN

UP FOR: → Han Solo
TURNED IT DOWN FOR: → *Amie Hall* (which beat *Star Wars* for Best Picture)
HOW SW WOULD'VE BEEN DIFFERENT: → Every line delivered slowly, menhantly, buttingly, brightly, brightly



JODIE FOSTER

UP FOR: → Princess Leia
TURNED IT DOWN FOR: → *Friday* (which beat *Star Wars* for Best Picture — and)
HOW SW WOULD'VE BEEN DIFFERENT: → John Winkley attempts to assassinate Vader to get her attention

NICK NOLTE

UP FOR: → Han Solo
TURNED IT DOWN FOR: → *The Deep*
HOW SW WOULD'VE BEEN DIFFERENT: → Han Solo continuously drunk



going up in flames

BISSY SPACEK

UP FOR: → Princess Leia
TURNED IT DOWN FOR: → *Carrie*
HOW SW WOULD'VE BEEN DIFFERENT: → Stormtrooper's



uses "Turbo V-8" to beat *TIE Fighters*

BURT REYNOLDS

UP FOR: → Han Solo
TURNED IT DOWN FOR: → *Smoky and the Bandit*
HOW SW WOULD'VE BEEN DIFFERENT: →

CLYDE THE ORANGUTAN

UP FOR: → Chewbacca
TOOK: → *Every Which Way But Loose*
HOW SW WOULD'VE BEEN DIFFERENT: → Much more sailing of poop

DEVELOPER →	Zipper Interactive
PUBLISHER →	Electronic Arts
REQUIRED →	Pi66, 32MB RAM, 240 MB hard disk space
IDEAL →	Pi1 333, 64MB RAM, Voodoo II, A3D Sound Card

Recoil

The Chinese food of videogames — tangy, but you'll forget it an hour later

MULTIPLAYER

JOYSTICK

3D SOUND

ACCELE-RATED

Recoil is optimized for 3Dfx cards, but can be played through D3D. For the best results, go with a Voodoo 2. The software mode doesn't look bad and the framerate is playable. EA says you can play this with a Pi66, but don't try it unless you enjoy slide shows. Slow systems will produce choppy results when more than one enemy appears or stuff blows up.

RIVA TNT



VOODOO 2



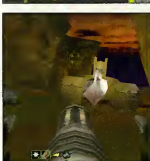
VOODOO 1



MATROX G200



API SUPPORT: Direct 3D, Glide

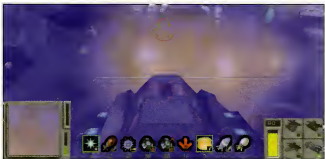
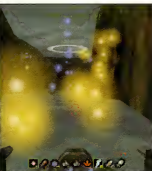


In the evolving world of gaming, realistically complex games are quickly becoming the norm. Any combat sim worth its weight in silicon boasts realism as its main selling point, but all that real-life stuff doesn't always translate into fun. That is why it's cool to find a game like *Recoil*, which blatantly revels in a complete lack of strategy and plausibility.

The plot is a real humdinger. It's the old "machines have taken over" theme stolen from *The Terminator*; evil tanks roam the Earth, keeping vigil over pesky humans. The rebellion, consisting of three GenX-ers in a van, notice that you have stumbled into an experimental enemy tank called the BFT. They send mission briefings to your Big F—king, err... Battle Force Tank, in that edgy, in-your-face way that only exists in FMV cut-scenes and MTV commercials. Skip through them — the ending is always "and blow it up!"

And blow it up, you will. The tank's turret obligingly turns green whenever you point it at something "blow up-able." Health icons and ammo are conveniently left behind by destroyed enemies or dropped by the cargo planes that carry you from level to level.

Which brings me to a small rant: If the rebellion has access to these planes and all that ammo, why don't they just bomb the crap out of the machines, instead of trusting the future of human civilization to any idiot who finds a tank?



Next on "Lost in Space" — Dr. Smith steals a tank. Hilarity ensues.

Recoil can be played from either a first-person or third-person perspective, but I discovered that controlling both the tank and independent turret in third person is a real bitch (and not the sultry Sharon Stone kind).

Incentives keep you going, but there aren't enough to make the game memorable. Throughout the game's six campaigns, *Recoil* boasts 18 weapons, including the default pulse gun, sonic burst cannon, missile launchers, and even nukes. Tank upgrades add the ability to glide around on water and lava or become submersible. Enemy tanks, 15 in all not including pulse and laser turrets, each mimic one of your weapons. (Make enemies a little different? No, that requires imagination.)

Campaigns are set up in linear paths from one mission to another. The only real strategy is using your HUD to snipe on tanks before they see you. The rest is arcade-style — big, bold, and brassy. Environments are cloyingly Mario-esque. Lava level? Check. Snow level? Check. The graphics aren't anything to rave about, but the explosions are fierce and colorful ... and that's the point, isn't it? Unfortunately, each campaign takes around two hours, making an entire game of *Recoil* last only 12 hours total.

Multiplayer over LAN or Internet is like *Quake* with tanks, but without the interesting level design. Internet play is only available through Westwood Online — good

if you already have an account, but my attempt to acquire one resulted in several "wrong password" messages. If you're an old-school action gamer, *Recoil* will take you back ... for a little while, anyway.

— CHUCK OSBORN didn't get to use any of his finely-crafted tank puns in this review. Gee, tanks a lot, Chuck

GRAPHICS

Monotonous textures aren't very detailed, but damn if stuff doesn't blow up nice. Hope you like green.

SOUND

Techno-grunge music tries too hard, but can be turned off. A3D support helps keep track of enemies.

DEPTH

Things with more depth: Hector, paper towels, soup, Carrot Top, shallow graves.

DESIGN

Linear. The tanks go boom. See them go boom? Vroom, vroom, vroom ... boom, boom, boom.

RATING

+ Pluses

- Lack of depth
- Never having to say you're sorry
- All out action

Minuses

- Lack of depth
- Inispid plot
- Internet play restricted

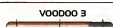
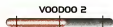
DEVELOPER → Beyond Games
 PUBLISHER → Accolade
 REQUIRED → P200, 32MB RAM,
 300MB hard drive space, 4X CD-ROM,
 3D accelerator
 IDEAL → PII 400, big-ass AGP D3D
 accelerator card

Redline

If thought his driving was bad, you should see him walk ...

ACCELE-RATED

This Direct3D accelerator-required action game looks spectacular, especially with 32-bit color. The AGP Viper 550 really made the colors come to life, and though Voodoo 2 performance was excellent, some details seemed lost in 16-bit color. On one system, Direct3D (TNT) frame rate performance was sketchy, though no such problems existed under Glide.



API SUPPORT: Direct 3D, glide



Welcome to my surreal motorist nightmare.

First-person shooting and vehicular combat merged seamlessly together in a post-apocalyptic gang-ruled future — just the idea is enough to put it into the upper echelons of coolness. Taking its cue from the likes of *Mad Max* (and the Atari Lynx game *Battle Wheels*, on which Beyond Games first cut their developer teeth), Accolade's *Redline* is a first-person shooter with a distinctively different bent. As the quintessential "Man With No Name," you're a cold-hearted homicidal bad-ass who gets inducted into "The Company" to fight in a futuristic gang war.

The 12 single player missions mix standard first-person shooting with 76-like car combat. Sections of the levels require you to be in a vehicle, while others (such as entering buildings) mean that you're on foot. Cars have front, side, and rear firing weapons. On-foot weapons include a buzz-saw (also used for flying in multi-player), machine gun, shotgun, rocket, and grenade launcher, and with all the vehicle weapons, pushes the total to 40+ instruments of bloody pulp creation.

The impressive graphics engine uses Direct3D to create great-looking textures, lighting effects, and gorgeous and plentiful explosions. In short, you'll find all the eye candy fit to swallow within *Redline*'s surprisingly varied, downright huge, and incredibly difficult (or sadist, if you prefer) levels.



God, how I hate pedestrians ...

Audio effects are well done, with appropriate sounds of vehicular destruction and dying, and even the voice acting is decent. The hard rock/techno tunes match the game's carnage, although it won't exactly set fire to any musical charts. More important than the great looks are the solid controls and exceptional mixture of two vastly different physics models (on-foot and in the car). Cars have very detailed damage models, and handle like heavyset arcade racing machines, while the on-foot controls should be familiar to anyone who has ever played an FPS.

There are a couple of problems, though. On foot, it was too easy to get hung up on obstacles while strafing, and there are slight "gaps" in the physics logic now and then — like being able to use the handbrake in the air. Also, the characters explode at the drop of a hat, spewing forth gibbs in a comically over-the-top display. Character animation is decent if not exceptional, and the various gang member skins are well detailed. Where the enemies fail is in their AI. It's basic at best, and non-existent at worst. It's almost like their firepower was increased to cover up their primitive moves, making missions very difficult.

Redline handles up to 12 players over the net, and since the latest version of GameSpy supports it, servers are easy to find. Internet performance proved very good, though over LAN it bogged down after four people joined (a patch

was promised but not available at press time). Free-for-all, team, and gang play are all supported.

Redline is a lot of fun and damn hard, with great graphics, distinctive and involving gameplay, and impressive carnage. *Mad Max* would be proud.

— JASON D'APRILE possesses a certain post-apocalyptic mutant charm that drives the babes wild

GRAPHICS

Sharp, detailed textures, special effects galore, huge visual range, and incredible explosions.

SOUND

Good sound effects, decent tunes, and humorous voice action.

DEPTH

You can kill people on foot and from the driver's seat. How much deeper can you go?

DESIGN

Aside from the sadistic difficulty, missions have distinct features and the action is incredibly engaging.

RATING 7

+ Pluses

- Fantastic, momentous explosions
- On-foot and in-car action merged seamlessly
- Plain of homicidal fun

- Minuses

- Occasional control problems
- Too many bugs
- Oddly cartoon style gibbs

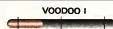
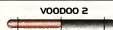
DEVELOPER →	Verant Interactive
PUBLISHER →	g89 Studios
REQUIRED →	P466, 32MB RAM, 500MB hard drive, 4X CD-ROM, 4MB D3D or Glide video card, 28.8 modem
IDEAL →	PII 300, 64MB RAM, 16MB D3D video card, cable modem, no real life

Everquest

The Never-Ending Story (or Rat Hunter 3D — your choice)

ACCELE-RATED

Glide support meant that Voodoo cards gave a better look in many cases than the TNT (and also made the dark areas more visible to the infraction-less humans with the gamma adjustment). On one Voodoo 2 system, spell effects were distorted by ugly square black boxes, and on another the Voodoo 2 card failed to recognize at all in the Options menu and defaulted to a TNT-based primary driver — until the card drivers were updated. So make sure you have the latest. Right at deadline Verant patched the game with Banshee support.



API SUPPORT: Direct3D, Glide

Reviewing a game is, with very few exceptions, a finite process. In cookie-cutter storytelling fashion, there's a beginning, a middle, and most crucially, an end. At the conclusion, Johnny Reviewer has a very clear picture of the game's features and elements, and then the final judgement call (aka "rating") is made. *Everquest* is one of those very rare exceptions (alongside the likes of *Quake II*, *Championship Manager 3*, and even *Tribes*).

There's certainly a beginning, that is both compelling and mind-numbingly frustrating. If there's a middle I certainly haven't found it, having already logged some 60+ hours. And the end? I know what could be considered "the ultimate confrontation" is, having witnessed it over 18 months ago when g89 Studios began showing off their creation, but getting to that end might only be accomplished should I decide to rescind all "real world" activity and live just one life in Norrath. It's a thought...

Everquest is, to use the marketing vernacular, a "massively multiplayer" online-only, 3D accelerator-only, fantasy roleplaying epic.

The mammoth mythical world of Norrath is home to numerous playable races (from the usual elves, halflings, and humans to the more

exotic erudites, trolls, and ogres). Starting out on an *Everquest* journey begins with creating your character. Select one of those races, a profession (warrior, mage, shadowknight, druid, rogue, and more), assign a few customizing points to your character's attributes (strength, dexterity — y'know, the AD&D drill), pick a face, a name, and a religion, and you're ready to rock and roll (or kill rats, as it were).

It's simple, but the developers really wanted to get across the sense of being in a fantasy world. Sorry, but you can't pick a name like "PCXL FatRhino" or "Don Knotts" — it has to be in keeping with the style for your race (and suggestions are offered to help out). This is the first example of the developers gently persuading you to play the game a certain way, a limitation that follows



Gnoll scouts in really funky shoes, giant spiders, rabid wolves, and unreal sunsets — all at a cost of only \$10/month.





Combat is turn-based, with strikes dependent on your offense skill and weapon speed, preventing tpb's from ruling the world. You gain experience just by using skills.



It's all about the people. Be amicable, get in with a fun group, and the game becomes even more compelling. When you're lost in the wilderness, friends can really help.

3RD PERSON REVIEW



I didn't play *Everquest*, but every single day I watched (ahh... endured) Rob slaughtering legions of rodents. Here is my review of watching Rob play.

GRAPHICS

The rats look... uh... like rats, and the whole world is nicely crafted in 3D. Only one problem, it's completely unnecessary. *Everquest* would be just as good if it were text-based. On the good side, the Rob model was photo-realistic.

SOUND

Rob's normally charming British accent replaced by go-kyu whinnies and phrases like, "No way, you little bugger!"

DESIGN

Rob didn't seem to mind that he was nothing more than a medieval exterminator, but it bugged the hell out of me. Why in the hell would the designers make killing boring creatures such a huge part of the game?

DEPTH

Rob's sessions seemingly lasted longer than a Jerry Lewis telethon. However, there is still some debate as to which is more entertaining: Rob killing rats and cowering in a corner, or Jerry's kids huddling onstage begging for money.

RATING

Better than "Moussa," worse than "Felicity."

PLUSES

- Beats working
- Great opportunity to ridicule Rob
- The look of child-like innocence on Rob's face as he sits yet another rat

MINUSES

- Turn-based battle is even more boring to watch
- Struggled to notice strange creatures on the back of Rob's head

-MIKE SALMON

through to Player Killing (you choose if you want to do it or not, most players don't), as well as the economic and experience system (at higher levels you get nothing from slaying snakes). It's all about balance, and no doubt learning from the perils and pitfalls that beset *Origin's Ultima Online* (which could fairly be judged as the beta test for the whole *Everquest* project). I personally think that by making high-end items monstrously expensive, and eliminating cheap ways to get money, the developers have come up with the fairest method to ensure the sanity of the vast majority of players.

There simply aren't enough pages to detail the depth, from the (compelling?) monotony of slaying that soot rat in the early levels, to the cautiously optimistic mindset in mid-level encounters away from familiar stomping grounds, to swaggering confidence at high levels. When you die at 5th level and

above, you lose experience points, and begin the game without sword, food, or water, making every step toward the next level a major achievement. It's this level advancement, as well as the variety and scale of the luscious 3D accelerated worlds (where you don't know how powerful the fire drake is until it breathes and you become charcoal) that will pull you keep you coming back time and time again. It's about solving the puzzles of the numerous quests, it's about getting that better sword, it's about meeting and greeting other people, it's about staying alive, it's about dying, it's about... amazingly... life.

I pondered long and hard about the rating. *Everquest* suffers from a range of bugs that are fixed on a weekly basis, but none of them really hindered a great gaming experience. Connection times were good, although slowed down in densely-populated regions when connecting at 28.8. Finally, it came



Slaying giant rats — our favorite new pastime.

down to a score based on the fact that in the middle of deadline week, I stayed up until 3:30 AM one night, and 5:00 AM the next, to keep playing. "It's work," I kept telling myself, when in fact I'd just capitulated to *Everquest* — one of the most incredibly addictive gaming experiences ever.

—ROB SMITH is still being ridiculed by the "much cooler" PCXL staff for his appreciation of *Everquest* over Tribes

GRAPHICS

Excellent. A variety of textures provide a great feel to sights and monsters.

SOUND

It can be useful, but it's quite possible to play without it on at all. Satisfactory.

DEPTH

Bottomless. Like *UO*, but more immersive. A must for any RPG fan.

DESIGN

Strict measures ensure you play the game how it was intended, but makes for a better game. Tough decisions have been made competently.

RATING 9

+ Pluses

- Staggeringly addictive
- Designed to be fun for everyone
- Excellent interface

- Minuses

- Staggeringly addictive
- Busy servers can slow down
- I want my normal life back

“GAME OF

Awarded by over 30 publications, including Computer Gaming World,

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THE YEAR™

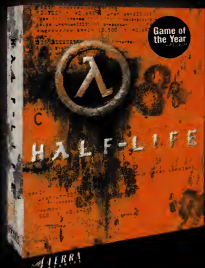
PC Gamer, PC Games, CNET Gamecenter, Blue's News, PC Accelerator...



SIERRA
STUDIOS

DEVELOPED BY
VALVE

MATURE
17+



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Go to <http://pcxi.ign.com/gaming411>: Product Number 43

DEVELOPER → Cyclone Studios

PUBLISHER → 3DO

REQUIRED → Pd66, 32MB RAM, 16MB HD space, 2MB video card

IDEAL → PII 300, 64MB RAM, 3D accelerated video card

Requiem: Avenging Angel

Killing in the name of ...

ACCELE-RATED

God said, "Let there be colored lighting." And it was done. "Let there be trilinear filtering." And it was done. *Requiem* will support Glide and Direct 3D, and runs similarly on most cards. The Voodoo 3 was impressive in the highest res and all other cards were very playable at 800 x 600. All glitches are a fault of the engine.

RIVA TNT



VOODOO 3



VOODOO 2



ATI RAGE FURY



API SUPPORT: Direct 3D, Glide

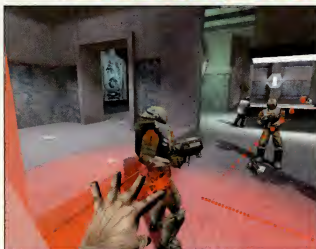
If your introduction into the gaming world has been the pen-and-paper roleplaying route, *Requiem* will unquestionably smack of *In Nomine* by Steve Jackson Games — both feature loads of bad-ass, butt-kicking corporeal angels with a penchant for secular, ballistic weapons, on a holy mission from God. If your head has not sprouted a propeller of adequate size to know about pen-and-paper games, your closest cultural reference point will likely be *The Crow*, but either way,

you'll get the idea. As an agent of divine vengeance, you're ready to open a family-sized grail of whup-ass on scores of infernal minions. What right-thinking human being could resist?

Requiem: Avenging Angel is a first-person shooter that, while ultimately spanning the realms of Heaven, Hell, and Creation (humanity), starts off with a brief and unpleasant sprint through Chaos, the infernal region between Heaven and Earth, thick with the dismembered and wailing torsos of the damned. As the

avenging angel Malachi (wings, divine powers, and all), you must make your way to the portal connecting Chaos to Creation in order to thwart the plans of the Fallen. These malcontents are a subset of misguided ex-angels bent on enacting what they believe to be the will of God Almighty: The extermination of the morally bankrupt, failed experiment known as Man. Sound heavy? It is.

Once you commit yourself to Earth, you've forsaken your wings, and it will be a long, heavy, hack-and-slash through demon-thrall'd humanity before you gain a host of heavenly powers. But you'll want to get your beloved wings back as soon as you can (for flight, obviously). The powers you'll be using include Locusts (to unleash a fluttering plague on your foes), Bloodboil, Possession (to directly control an enemy), and that Old Testament favorite, To Salt (wherein you unleash a whole "Lot" of indiscriminate granular vengeance on your enemy).



Each use of Angelic powers requires Divine Essence. Make sure you have enough before engaging the enemy.



This is where the Orkin Angelic power comes in handy.

MYSTERIOUS WAYS

Dare you presume to know the mind of God, you pitiful little planarian? Here are a few books and films that offer food for thought on this way-, means, and the nine billion names of God.

THE SCREWTAPE LETTER BY C.S. LEWIS

Using the rhetoric of the "Lowerarchy of Hell," this dark (and funny) collection of informal, m/m-ee unwittingly clues in John Q. Sinclair to the M.O. of the Devil. **THE MORAL:** Hell is so desperate, they'll even take you.

EVERYTHING THAT RISES MUST CONVERGE BY FLANNERY O'CONNOR

One of America's great prose stylists, this Christian author singlehandedly recreated what we know as "Southern Gothic." A good man is harder to find than you think.

THE MORAL: When God wants your opinion, you'll know it, and He'll give it to you.

JACOB'S LADDER

DIRECTED BY ADRIAN LYNE
Jacob Singer's post-Vietnam life is going to hell — literally.

THE MORAL: If you're afraid of dying, and you're holding on, you'll see devils tearing your life away, but if you've made your peace, then the devils are really angels, bringing you from the Earth. It's just a matter of how you look at it.

THE RAPTURE

DIRECTED BY MICHAEL TOLKIN
Mimi Rogers and a then-unknown David Duchovny run a fan of a super-secret sect in on the most low-key, confusing, and bizarre theological films ever made. Devout Christian or atheist, you'll walk away from this one reeling. **THE MORAL:** Uh ... huh?



THE BIG GUY



Certain enemies in *Requiem* are weak and can only track by smell. This isn't one of them.

Requiem is an unusual first-person candidate not only in its stern, Bible-punk mentality, but also in its adventure-game veneer. As you progress, you get to interact with characters who can provide information valuable to the completion of the game. The ultimate object involves humankind's first interstellar starship, the Leviathan, and the Fallen's devious plans surrounding it. It's a shame, though, that some moral obligations are not required or rewarded (i.e., saving civilians from interrogation offers no immediate reward).

A (heavenly) host of combat options are divided into Angelic and Secular categories. Secular weapons include the expected pistols, shotguns, rocket launchers, and the like (featuring the

now-popular sniper rifle and my personal favorite, the "Revelations Railgun"). But the game really starts to get weird with the Angelic powers. While Flight, Heal, Haste, and Holy Light do pretty much what you'd expect, you've also got *Insist* (which turns enemies to friends), *Banish* (which packs the target right off to the Abyss), and *Warp Time* (which slows all creatures, events, and objects around you).

As the Lord giveth, the Lord also taketh away, and some of the cooler powers are not available in *Requiem's* multiplayer games.

(On that note, if you're the kind of player who really tries to get into the character, don't get silly with the Angelic powers until you know what you're doing. While attempting to liberate innocents in the



"Bring me coffee, bitch!" This is the first boss you encounter.



Free of charge, you'll be seeing this thing long after gameplay, in your dreams. Call it a pack-in bonus.

early martial-law stages of New Jerusalem, I inadvertently flashed more than a few harmless bystanders. Sorry.)

Requiem has neither the brutal AI of *Half-Life* nor the drooling-smooth looks of *Unreal*, but it's a good, solid shooter with a brain, story, and even something of a soul — for all the armchair angels out there itching to bring not peace, but a sword.

— As an adjunct to finding God, **CHRIS HUDAK** uses only the choicest ice cubes of frozen holy water in his drinks

GRAPHICS

Hellish regions are particularly nasty; enemy forces are admirably detailed, assuming combat postures, etc.

SOUND

Excellent ambient sound, especially in the unpleasant Chaos regions. Audio cues aid single-player gameplay.

DEPTH

Refreshing changes of pace from standard FPS, including angelic powers and the protection of innocents.

DESIGN

Hardcore FPS fans will find it simplistic, but adventure elements elevate it to more than just a shooter.

RATING ?

+ Pluses

- Intriguing Bible-punk storyline
- Detailed enemies, lots of referential background art
- Radical "interactive" holy powers

- Minuses

- Inexplicable graphic glitches
- Limited AI in many enemies (including bosses)
- Several patches to come

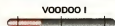
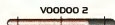
DEVELOPER →	Endis
PUBLISHER →	Pumpkin Studios
REQUIRED →	Pi66, 32MB RAM, 8X CD-ROM, 75MB hard disk, 2MB SVGA video card compatible
IDEAL →	P233, 64MB RAM, 16X CD-ROM, D3d compatible video card

Warzone 2100

Top-dollar survivalist hardware

ACCELE-RATED

Voodoo2 visuals were fluffy and vague, but in the good way that makes the all-important explosions much more fiery. On a TNT the units seemed crisper and the color had a greater depth. On a Voodoo 1 there was a significant slow down in frame rate when a lot of battling units were running in different directions at once.



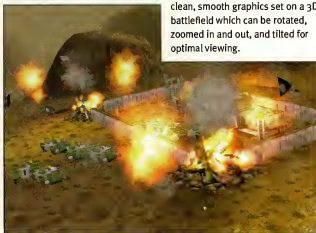
API SUPPORT: Direct3D, Glide

There are some things you need to know right off the bat about *Warzone 2100*. First, no matter what

you read, this is not the first real-time strategy game to employ technology-researching/unit-customizing strategies. *Extreme Tactics* did it competently, and *Warbreeds* did it badly, among others. Second, if you don't already have your real-time strategy chops reasonably bolted down, you're in for a really tough time. By the fifth or sixth battle if you listen closely, you'll actually be able to hear Pumpkin's band of sadistic developers laughing at you in the background. And third, even if you do have your RTS doodoo down, many of the familiar conventions you're accustomed to won't work — and this is a good thing, and an irritating, potentially frustrating one.

This very pretty and smooth RTS game is set in a, ahem, post-apocalyptic future. The Big One has come and gone. As one of the few relatively equipped, intelligent, and civilized groups of survivors, it's your job to recover valuable pre-Collapse military technologies, engage roving bands of Scavenger rogue-packs, and secure havens to eventually restore order to the late great planet Earth.

Geopolitical ugliness aside, *Warzone 2100* is a joy to the eyes — clean, smooth graphics set on a 3D battlefield which can be rotated, zoomed in and out, and tilted for optimal viewing.



A critical installation beautifully goes up in flames.



HONEY, I'M HOME! You could have invested some resources in tank traps, but noooooooooo ...

In keeping with the "RTS chic," installations, defensive structures, and the like are not limited to base proximity, but can be constructed anywhere by support trucks that beam structures into existence a la *Total Annihilation*. In the first few battles, it's kind of a hoot to let your trucks fight for you, constructing and instantly repairing turrets (reminiscent of *StarCraft*'s turtling Terrans tactic) as you reach the tech-artifacts needed to increase the production options.

With each artifact recovered, freedom to design your combat units blossoms with weapon mounts, propulsion systems, and special abilities. The scramble of technology quickly becomes either a wet dream or a nightmare, depending upon your perspective. Customizable AI routines that tell your units under which conditions to retreat can mean life or nibble-by-nibble death. All the while the enemy is biting you in the ankles, then retreating and sending in a fresh wave as soon as you inflict damage.

Also, your initial base and units carry over throughout the game — transport units ferry your tanks and cyborgs to distant locales for "away missions," forcing you to carefully consider each transport-load and your initial building strategy. This makes the game much, much more complicated. The warzone experience can become bogged down in unit micromanagement (or wrestling matches

with the, um, involved interface), but if you can make it past the initial difficulty, there's a story-driven and customizable RTS game here ... and it's got something for your post-apocalyptic, tank-rushing punk ass.

— CHRIS HUDAK *most definitely has his RTS "doo doo" down*

GRAPHICS

Primo. Rotateable/tiltable battlefields, smooth unit motion.

SOUND

Weak gunfire effects — plinks, clangs, and ricochets from automatic fire.

DEPTH

Fire spotting, AI settings, and transport missions allow for innovative strategies.

DESIGN

Ambitious, but a frantic war can sometimes sledge down into micromanagement hell.

RATING

+ Pluses

- Clean, smooth graphics and 3D terrain, great explosions
- Customizable unit design
- AI settings and looping construction allow for methodical sorties

Minuses

- Inadequate tutorial mission
- Too much micromanagement
- Too many time-restricted missions

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DEVELOPER → 2015, Inc./Ritual Entertainment
PUBLISHER → Activision
REQUIRED → Full version of *Sin*, P166, 32MB RAM, 350MB hard disk space, 4X CD-ROM
IDEAL → P11 266MHz, 64MB RAM, 3D accelerator card, a giant hard drive

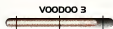
Wages of Sin

Give *Sin* a second chance

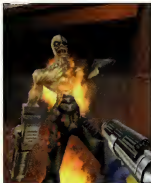
MULTIPLAYER

ACCELE-RATED

Though not required, *Wages of Sin* looks and plays best with an accelerator card. Since it's based on the Quake engine, OpenGL is the only 3D video driver available, but you can use several OpenGL drivers: Default, 3Dfx, RIVA, PowerVR or Verite. Microsoft's DirectX 6.0 is also required to play, and is bundled on the CD.



API SUPPORT: Open GL



It's no secret that Activision prematurely launched *Sin* last year, likely just to beat *Half-Life* to shelves. The shoddy disappointment then required an 18.5MB patch to fix a myriad of bugs, and bring down the mammoth 200MB save games (and subsequent huge load times) to something more bearable. Even that didn't fix the criminally obese 800MB install. And guess what, hard drive guzzlers — the add-on requires a further 350MB.

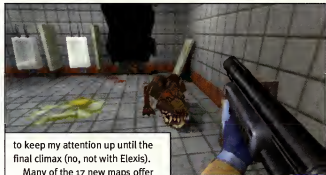
That all said, once fully patched, *Sin* is a decent, if uninspired shooter. As such, the more thought-provoking and original mission design of this add-on pack is actually a pleasant surprise.

Wages continues exactly where *Sin* left off. After returning from the island showdown with Elexis Sinclair, Blade must deal with Freeport mob boss Gianni Manero, who's allegedly experimenting with the U6 mutagen to create a new race of mutants for his own gain. As with *Sin*, there are a number of plot twists, surprises, and effective cut-scenes without ever leaving the game engine.

First Impressions, though, were not good, with dark, tedious levels mixed with boring weapons and horribly clichéd dialogue. But after plodding through the first two hours, both the level design and overall style improved sufficiently



Flaming zombies, mutants in suits, and ... Monica Lewinsky?



Bad dog! Look what you did on the floor!

to keep my attention up until the final climax (no, not with Elexis).

Many of the 17 new maps offer original twists, such as an art museum where you can't shoot the paintings, and a casino littered with civilians to be kept alive. There's also a shipyard and an abandoned six-floor building (an excellent multiplayer map). Reminiscent of *Rainbow Six* or *Thief*, Blade must use stealth in one mission to stay out of the security camera's view while quietly pegging off the guards with a silencer. Later in the game, Blade finds night vision goggles and ropes to climb and swing on. There are a few mini-games embedded throughout the game, too.

The weapons are still a mixed bag. The Plasma Bow and crop of bullet-based guns are average at best, but the Flame Thrower and the Stinger Pack are decent for torturing new mutants. Humorously incompetent security guards yell out lines like "Ow! My finger!" and "Please stop or I might shoot you!" Creatures include a dude whose stomach explodes, exposing a giant spider, and roughly ten other mutants to toast.

Thankfully time has been spent creating a more robust multiplayer game with 13 multiplayer maps and two new modes. The "Hoverbike" Deathmatch game is a blast, with checkpoints and fastest lap incentives to win extra frag points. Another multiplayer mode added is "Mob Rules," a tag game for solo players ("Marked for Death") or teams ("Lynch Mob").

At \$20, the added quality of the single player levels, and the fun multiplayer modes make it a rec-

ommended investment if you were unfortunate enough to shell out top dollar for the original. But this pack doesn't rewrite the *Sin* report card that so far reads, "Must do much better!"

— MARC SALTZMAN has spent many of his wages on *Sin*

GRAPHICS

The bright 16-bit color palette and real world environments look great, as do the explosions.

SOUND

Music is pretty cool, especially the cheesy lounge music pumping through the casino levels.

DEPTH

For an expansion pack, it offers another 10 or so hours of single-player gameplay. Solid A+.

DESIGN

Some memorable levels and moments (a vital ingredient for any 3D shooter).

RATING 7

+ Pluses

- Gets better as game progresses
- Violence, bad language and T & A
- Updates *Sin* to v1.0.3; no freezes or crashes found at all

- Minuses

- First few levels are drab
- Difficult to find multiplayer games
- No hoverbike use in single-player

DEVELOPER → Digital Integration
 PUBLISHER → Titus
 REQUIRED → P90, 16MB RAM, 70MB
 hard drive space, 2X CD-ROM
 IDEAL → P166, 32MB RAM, 4X CD-
 ROM, a gun — so you can go on a
 bloody rampage to protest this crap

Rival Realms



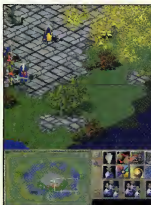
Realtime strategy for wussies

ACCELE-RATED

Ha, that's a good one! You people
 kill me.



Like most of the monsters,
 this flying thing looks nasty,
 but is easy to kill.



Your wizards put on a pretty good light show.

This review is all Rob Smith's fault. Last year, when I used strong-arm tactics to assume control of PCXL, I told Rob I'd like to review a game or two a month. It'd be good for the team's morale (everyone loves a boss who works — you could learn something from this, Salmon), and it'd help me keep in touch with the readers. But now Rob throws me this new realtime strategy game called *Rival Realms*. While it seems all the European mags loved it (shows what those kiss-ups know), this total turd makes *Dominion* look like the cream of the RTS crop. Yes, it's really that bad.

The familiar story behind *Rival Realms* is that in some fantasy world way back when, there were Humans, Elves, and Greenskins all fighting for control of the lands of whatever. Blah, blah, blah — you get the picture. Normally I find all fantasy crap about as exciting as a barium enema, but the box copy promised big clashes with swords, arrows, and deadly magic spells.

Unfortunately, the game fails to deliver any of those promises. Oh sure, there are big magical fights and arrows galore, but there's one major problem — they look like shit. The graphics in this game are simply horrible. The whole thing looks like a quick knock-off of *WarCraft*, except *WarCraft* was out four years ago.



Look, ma, that there dragon is shooting his fire breath!

The game is made horribly frustrating by an interface that isn't intuitive at all, and finding out what your mission objectives are is a pain in the ass. Between each mission there's a planning area for saving your boys from the previous mission and hiring new ones. Unfortunately not enough information is supplied to ensure you get the right new recruits. And while the in-game building tree makes sense, the entire affair is way more convoluted than it should be.

The missions are pretty standard RTS fare: Defend your base, attack their base, etc. A few involve finding hidden spells or other specialty items, but too often these degenerate into killing all the enemies and then wandering an empty level looking for the objective.

Don't get me started on the AI. Enemy units will bumble about, attacking with no rhyme or reason, or just stand there while you whip up on 'em. Your own boys aren't any smarter. If you send them on a long journey, they'll wander about aimlessly, get lost, split off into groups, or just stop for no reason. During battles some units decide they've had enough and run away. Damn cowards.

Rival Realms lets you play as one of three races, and there are 60 levels divided out among them. Unlike *StarCraft*, however, the differences are primarily how technologically advanced they are. But in the end, each side has units that somewhat correspond to each other. Not very exciting.

The game also features multiplayer, but nobody is going to want to try it out — the control and interface are too annoying, and the AI makes *Age of Empires* look revolutionary. *Rival Realms* is basically a really crappy *WarCraft* knock-off. If you see a copy, set it on fire immediately — humanity will be better off because of it.

— CECIL BLOOMFIELD wants to
 kill whoever's behind this travesty

GRAPHICS

They suck — really, really badly.

SOUND

The dialogue clips could have been taken right from *WarCraft* — they're that similar. And the music will drive you ape shit.

DEPTH

There is none.

DESIGN

You people are really funny, you know that?

RATING

+ Pluses

- Units can trade power-ups with each other
- The box makes a nice projectile
- You can use the CD jewel case for other non-sucky CDs

Minuses

- Bad graphics
- Piss poor AI
- The whole thing flat-out sucks

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DEVELOPER → Charybdis, Inc.
PUBLISHER → Acclaim Entertainment
REQUIRED → P200, 32 MB RAM, 4x
CD-ROM, 114 MB hard drive space,
Direct 3D accelerator
IDEAL → PII 350, 3D sound card, 400
MB hard drive space

Machines

Welcome to my machine ...

3D SOUND

ACCELE-RATED

Direct3D support means that the TNT certainly gave the finest definition. On a Voodoo 2 the look was a little darker overall, still sharp and good looking, but lacking a little bit of that TNT crispness.

RIVA TNT



VOODOO 2



VOODOO 1



MATROX G200



API SUPPORT: Direct3D

If nothing else, the first half of 1999 is notable due to the lack of obnoxiously overdone realtime strategy (henceforth known as RTS) games. Let's face it, of the countless clones shoved out, maybe four of them were worth the spit-shine of the CDs they were pressed on. And *Dominion* was not one of them.

Total *Annihilation*, however, definitely was, and Acclaim's *Machines* follows close behind TA's lead, sporting some cool new features, even if it's not nearly as innovative. The powerful camera options let you zoom in and out of *Machines*'s fully 3D world, rotate the map around to your heart's content, and even go into a first-person mode (a la *Battlezone*, et al), adding an interesting new layer of strategy. The maps take full advantage of the keen, crisp, and tasty 3D engine, with lots of lovely lighting, great smoke, big explosions, and slick textures. *Machines* is one keen-looking game.

It's also a great sounding game. High-quality sound effects add a succinct feel to the robotic war,

and the orchestral rock soundtrack matches the atmosphere perfectly. Even the droning voices are pretty good.

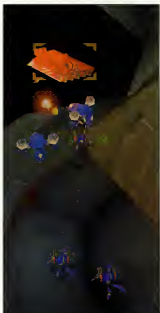
Play control has a few notable exceptions from the norm. There's only one race (flying in the face of popular *StarCraft* fashion), but it makes up for this seemingly negligent design aspect by giving players a very in-depth research tree, and by making the funky worker robots incredibly entertaining to play with and watch.

The main single player game is only 20 missions, but they're well designed, challenging, and avoid the "build base/kill enemy" cliché by including kidnapping, rescuing, and infiltration missions. The highlights are the squad-based missions within buildings. There are also stand-alone skirmish maps for quick battles to try out multiplayer plans. Internet play was also very stable, handled through TCP/IP and the Internet Gaming Zone.

Some gameplay flaws and annoyances hinder gameplay, however. While the units are humorously aggressive (these guys run after anything that ain't their color), the pathfinding is sometimes egregiously slow and confused. Also, *Machines* has no TA-style unit tracking function, unintuitive way point setting, and a fairly low zoom range.

Though far from groundbreaking, *Machines* is still fun, and the units are a hoot to watch. Even better, the game shares TA's penchant for momentarily huge robotic battles, causing hordes of things to blow up with vigor. The game is a tad too short, but the later levels are very tough. Quite simply, *Machines* is one of the most engaging RTS games in recent memory.

— JASON D'APRILE got *heavily beaten by a girl during a Machines multiplayer match, and doesn't feel bad about it. In fact, he kind of liked it...*



Ahhhh! Get out of my parking spot, you bastards!

GRAPHICS

Excellent 3D graphics, with good lighting, explosions, and weapons effects.

SOUND

Great sound effects, a good soundtrack, and 3D sound support.

DEPTH

While mission design is very good, there's only 20 of them.

DESIGN

The variety of missions gives it more impact than most games of this sort, plus a useful research tree.

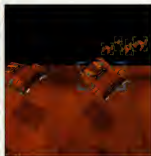
RATING

+ Pluses

- Excellent graphics and sound
- Highly maneuverable camera
- Variety of challenging missions

- Minuses

- Can't zoom out far enough
- No auto-tracking and way pointing
- Interface buttons small and fiddly

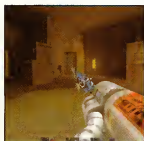


(Above Right) Taxis of the future suck as much as they do now.

The Test of Time

or "Upon Further Review"

Time. It makes wine better, magically (or should I say tragically) turns Duran Duran into "classic rock," and allows us to realize when we were right and when we were wrong. The Test of Time can be cruel, but it is the only way to separate true greatness from an over-hyped flash in the pan. Do you agree? Let us know at urstillhigh@pcxl.com.



Sweet blue stream of gibs! *Quake II*: Nothing can compare to you.



"Don't shoot! The patch is coming and it'll fix everything, honest."



The best teamplay game in existence. No matter what Rob says.

QUAKE II

Reviewed in PC Games: March '98
Game released: December '97

ORIGINAL
SCORE



ORIGINAL THOUGHTS→ The 3DFX-enhanced visuals were a new graphical high on the PC and that same *Doom/Quake* grit had carried through to the sequel. Limited monster AI made the single player game less compelling.

WHAT WE THINK NOW→ Who the hell cares about single player *Quake II*? Answer: Nobody. The multiplayer game is so damn good that it still gets the most play. *Quake II* is still the very basis by which all other games are judged.

SUPPORT→ Never before has a game bred and maintained such a passionate, dedicated, and large following. With tons of levels, mods, skins, TCs, fansites, dedicated servers, and a whole lot of players, *Quake II* still has more support than any other game released after it. Long live *QII*!

HOW LONG IT LASTED→ Still no end in sight. Every time one of us starts up *QII* and that oh so familiar "thud" blares out of the speakers, the whole office stops work (although this isn't really a major accomplishment) and "Quakes."

REVIEWER'S EXCUSE→ "I thought that a single player component was important back then. But I would never have guessed that after 15 months its multiplayer deathmatch would still be my favorite game." — ROB SMITH



TEST OF
TIME SCORE

BLOOD 2

Issue reviewed in: January '99
Game released: November '98

ORIGINAL
SCORE



ORIGINAL THOUGHTS→ Despite pointing out that the game was "buggy as hell," featured "laggy internet play," and didn't have "any depth," our reviewer went on to give the game an 8.

WHAT WE THINK NOW→ All of the points Jason made in the review were true, but with the number of more polished 3D shooters available at the time, we feel the score was waaaaay too high. Yes *Blood 2* is a decent FPS, but since when do we give decent games an 8? Never again, that's for sure.

SUPPORT→ Monolith, to their credit, was quick to patch this game, and apologetic about the poor condition in which the game was released. They were also quick to blame publisher GT for "rushing" the game out the door. The dismal sales, laggy internet play, and same-old DM have meant very little player support.

HOW LONG IT LASTED→ About as long as the rock and roll career of '70s teen idol Lief Garrett. There were too many good games for us to deal with the constant patches, and insane difficulty.

REVIEWER'S EXCUSE→ "In retrospect I realize I might have given it a point too high. Just blame it on the sex, drug, and alcohol-filled life of a freelancer."

— JASON D'APRILE



TEST OF
TIME SCORE

TRIBES

Issue reviewed in: March '99
Game released: November '98

ORIGINAL
SCORE



ORIGINAL THOUGHTS→ The internet coding, level design, strategic depth, and combination of indoor/outdoor environments were enough to warrant this game its lofty, yet deserved, rating.

WHAT WE THINK NOW→ Rob has admitted to his crack problem (though insists that this new rating is undeserved), while the rest of us still play the game nearly every day. One of the best games released this year, and maybe one of the 50 best ever.

SUPPORT→ More servers are springing up every day and they are full of the right kind of players. Because this is an online-only game, gamer support is the true definition of the game's rating.

HOW LONG IT LASTED→ No end in sight. And if support, maps, and a new scoring system (I want points for repairing shit and being a team player), it could be the only game released in the last decade to outlast *Quake II*.

REVIEWER'S EXCUSE→ "I was still really into *Barbie Fashion Designer* at the time and thought the *Tribes* uniforms clashed horribly, not to mention the colors were sooo 'last year.' Now I have accepted that a game can still be good, even without a strong sense of fashion."

— DAN EGGER



TEST OF
TIME SCORE

THIS AIN'T NO SKINS GAME.



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TONY GWYNN

Pre-High Heat Weight: 250
High Heat Weight: 185
Weight loss: 65 Pounds



CECIL FIELDER

Pre-High Heat Weight: 285
High Heat Weight: 185
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THE STANDINGS

The baseball season has begun and our first showdown has taken place. Next month we'll review the rest and see if *High Heat 2000* can maintain first place.

	GAME TITLE	W	L
BASKETBALL	NBA Live 99	2	0
	NBA Live 98	1	1
	NBA Action	0	2
FOOTBALL	NCAA 99	2	0
	GameDay 99	1	1
	Madden 99	0	2
GOLF	Links LS 99	4	0
	Tiger Woods 99	3	1
	Golden Tee Golf	2	2
	Pro 18 World Tour	1	3
	Fox Sports Golf 99	0	4
HOCKEY	NHL Hockey 99	2	0
	NHL Hockey 98	1	1
	Powerplay 98	0	2
BASEBALL	High Heat 2k	2	0
	Triple Play 2k	1	1
	Hardball 6: 2k Edition	0	2
	Baseball 2k Edition (VR)	-	-
	Microsoft Baseball 2k	-	-
SOCCER	FIFA 99	2	0
	Fox Sports Soccer 98	1	1
	Sensible Soccer 98	0	2

*Results not guaranteed

head to head

High Heat 2000 vs. Triple Play 2000

PC Baseball kicks off the 1999 season with one heck of a battle. Check back next month for a full roundup including *Microsoft Baseball 2000* and *Interplay's Baseball Edition 2000*.

GRAPHICS

EDGE
TRIPLE PLAY 2000

While both games look good, *Triple Play* gets the nod thanks to its excellent player animations and high-end presentation values

SOUND

CLEAR WINNER
TRIPLE PLAY 2000

The play-by-play in *TP2000* is the best in baseball and the game sounds, which are exaggerated for effect, work perfectly

CONTROL

EDGE
HIGH HEAT 2000

It comes down to the pitcher/batter interface and no game comes even close to the tense showdowns in *High Heat 2000*

REALISM

CLEAR WINNER
HIGH HEAT 2000

No question here: From statistics and simulation mode to that genuine plain old baseball feel, *High Heat* gets everything right

FINAL

WINNER
HIGH HEAT 2000

Team 366 improves last year's winner and rolls over the challenger from EA Sports

DEVELOPER → EA Sports
PUBLISHER → EA
REQUIRED → P166, 32MB RAM, 144MB hard drive, 4X CD-ROM
IDEAL → P233, 64MB RAM, 400MB hard drive, D3D card

ACCELE-RATED

Superbike World Championship supports all D3D cards. It runs the fastest on a Voodoo 2 or Voodoo 3 system, but looks best on a TNT or G400.



In the arcade mode, this corner is an exhilarating ride. In the sim mode, it's a ticket for an ambulance ride.

Superbike World Championship

It ain't perfect, but it sure is fun

Motorcycle racing games are few and far between (unlike futuristic arcade car racers). Either you're stuck with lighthearted arcade games like *Moto Racer GP* or *Motocross Madness*, or way serious sims like *Control Superbikes*. With this lack of middle ground, much of your racing time is spent either racing through ridiculously easy circuits, or painfully impossible recreations of a sport that is far too complex for the average gamer.

Superbike World Championship straddles that fine line between simulation and fun. When playing the arcade mode, the game takes over all the details for maniac drivers who just want the speed rush of street racing. While other sims have tried to do this, none

have managed to get the balance down as well as *Superbike*. On the simulation side, you're in control of absolutely every aspect of Superbike racing, which is incredibly difficult to learn, but eminently rewarding.

While graphics are only acceptable (resolutions higher than 640x480 should have been supported), the control is top notch, and the 12 real world tracks ensure plenty of replay. On the downside, the title would have been better had it allowed players to choose difficulty levels, and upped the AI of the computer drivers.

Superbike World Championship is still the most enjoyable motorcycle racer on the market. Even if you compare it to the best auto racing simulations (like *Grand Prix Legends*) the game holds its own. The high quality of both arcade and serious modes make it a game worth buying.

GRAPHICS

Looks good, but it should have supported higher resolutions.

SOUND

The bikes sound real and audio clues play a major role.

CONTROL

Excellent. Variety of control from beginner to advanced is strong.

REALISM

At the highest settings, this game is as real as it gets.

RATING 8

+ Pluses

- Great control
- Lots of playing options
- Realistic gameplay

- Minuses

- Lack of customizability for skill levels
- Weak opponent AI

DEVELOPER → Radish Works
PUBLISHER → HeadGames (Activision)
REQUIRED → P166, 32 MB RAM, 55MB hard drive, 4X CD-ROM
IDEAL → P233, 120MB hard drive Space, D3Dvideo card, shit for brains

ACCELE-RATED

Use a D3D card to accelerate this game. It doesn't really matter. The game will look just as ugly no matter what 3D accelerator you use.

Alright, I'm sick of this. The age of top-selling sucky games with a mainstream, mass-market appeal should be over. The general populous should have already said, "Hey, these sucky games are full of suck!" (Although the general populous has never been very good at thinking up witty things to say — unlike us.) Quite simply, the "Age of Sucky Games" should have died off by now. But alas, we continue to get more and more of this sucky crap shoveled onto our virtual doorsteps.

Take for instance this brilliant collection of PC code known as *Extreme Bullriding*. For the sarcasm-impaired, I actually mean that this game is a wretched collection of ones and zeros repre-

Extreme Bullrider

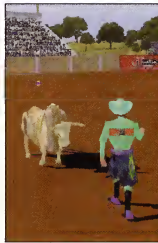
Another fine product from HeadGames

senting poo. From the vile halls of HeadGames (the crap game company bought and used by Activision as the cheap label so they don't sully their corporate name with such bile as *Extreme Tennis* and *Extreme Paintbrawl*) comes a game that one-ups the worthlessness of the company's earlier products by lacking anything even resembling gameplay.

Presumably, the gameplay resides in realistically recreating two rodeo sports — bullriding and running around in a clown suit picking up violins (I've never actually seen this sport on TNN, but I assume it's real). In the bullriding phase, you sit on a poorly-rendered bull that moves in slow, weakly-animated motions. ("Wee, I'm moving my mouse back and forth slowly, to simulate the action that is bullriding. Wee, I say, wee!") In the bullfighting phase you don't actually fight bulls — you run around in a clown suit, picking up random items that pop up in the field (quite possibly thrown by disgruntled violent fans,

angry they got stuck with this freakin' game). You avoid bulls and sidestep piles of cow dung, and if possible, try not to make any analogies between the cow dung on your screen and the cow dung in your CD-ROM drive.

It's a real tragedy that people will probably still buy it, even though it defines "piles of bunk" and nothing



The only joy here is putting this clown out of his misery.

in it that will entertain even the most forgiving gamer. Our readers had better not be the ones buying this execrable, you should all know better. Bottom line: You might say ("If you had the PCXL wily style), "This sucky game is full of suck."

GRAPHICS

This game can't even get the color of cowpiles right.

SOUND

The announcer is annoying the second the audio kicks in.

CONTROL

"Wee, this game is far too easy, Wee, I say, Wee!"

REALISM

Uh, do rodeo clowns really run around trying to pick up banjos, harmonicas, and boots?

RATING 1

+ Pluses

- It's EXTREME!
- It's fun the same way looking at a really ugly person is fun

- Minuses

- *Extreme Bullrider* besmirches the name of games

DEVELOPER → EA Sports
PUBLISHER → EA Sports
REQUIRED → Pentium 66, 4MB RAM, 50MB hard drive, 4X CD-ROM
IDEAL → Pentium 266, 4MB RAM, D3D card, 420MB hard drive

ACCELE-RATED

Triple Play 2000 is designed for most modern 3D cards. We'd suggest a Voodoo 2 or TNT to start, or any of the upcoming generation of cards in the future.

Bear with me. I'm going to write this review using really small words. You see, EA has dumbed down its baseball franchise so everyone can play them, and if that's the way of the future, I'll try it in our magazine. I will also define any larger, scary words you might not understand.

EA thinks that guys don't want to think their way through difficult simulations. (Oops, sorry, big word. How about we call them *sim*s?) They think people only want to play easy games.

In the past the *Triple Play* series has at least attempted (uh, tried) to make their games both fun and realistic (like you see on TV). This year, everything (all the game



EA does its best to make baseball look exciting, but frankly it's hard to do much with this source material.

Triple Play 2000

Rock and Jock Baseball (or baseball for dummies)

stuff) has been revamped (vamped again) in a style that is far more arcadey (like *Pac Man* in cleats) than in any past version.

For instance (here's what I'm talking about), the batting is overly simple (really, really easy). In fact it's so simple that you don't really have to think very much when you play the computer (the big beige box on your desk). Gone is the management-only mode (thinking stuff, don't worry about it) and easy-to-read statistics (number stuff, ditto), and in its place is just flashy gameplay. While this may be satisfying (happy-making) to some, to others it will feel a bit hollow (like some of the good stuff that makes baseball fun has been forgotten).

To know whether or not you will like this game, it's important (means a lot) to know what you like. If you want a game that feels like real baseball you'll be disappointed (like when you get socks for Christmas) by the poor statistics layout (the place where you find out which players did good), the clumsy fielding (catching the ball) control, overly aggressive (always getting the signal) baserunners, and the atrocious (so bad it will make you say swear words) umpire calls. In fact, sometimes it seems that it doesn't really matter where the ball



Dust effects and silky smooth animations add to the look of the game, but don't make it feel any more realistic.

crosses the plate, and this is unforgivable (it makes you say really big and vile (nasty in a kiss your mother kind of way) swear words).

However, if you want fast-paced baseball, *Triple Play* will make you all sorts of happy. The presentation (all the stuff that makes SportsCenter more fun than your local TV sports show) is as good as you'll find in a computer sports game. All the boring details (the 90% of baseball that makes you want to nap) have been excoriated (cut from the game, presumably by a Catholic priest). The fun details (the 10% of baseball that makes you want to pay \$22.00 for a beer and hot dog) are amped (made louder) with sound effects (booms and bams), graphic treats (zips and zings), and exciting play (more base hits than 2-2 counts).

It is possible to make a game both fun to play for novices (beginners) and satisfying for hardcore fans (guys who confuse Cal Ripken with Mother Theresa), but *Triple Play* is not up to the task. What it



If you're playing solo, you'll hit the ball almost every time.

does offer (fast but fake gameplay) it does very well, but games such as *High Heat 2000* have a more complete and more enjoyable experience (just more fun) for baseball fans (guys like us) and computer gamers (ditto).

GRAPHICS

Bat blur is sweet (hip speak for "really good").

SOUND

Great play by play and game sounds as always.

CONTROL

Fielding is a little difficult and the giant yellow direction arrows are horrible.

REALISM

This game's weak point: It's all about arcade gameplay.

RATING 7

+ Pluses

- Great presentation
- Fast play
- Excellent home run camera angles

- Minuses

- Poorly laid out strategy
- Doesn't feel like real baseball
- Some AI bugs haven't been fixed from last year

DEVELOPER → Team 366
PUBLISHER → JDO
REQUIRED → P166, 32MB RAM, 60MB hard drive, x4 CD-ROM
IDEAL → P166, 64MB RAM, 200MB hard drive, Direct3D card

ACCELE-RATED

Higher image quality of the TNT and Matrox g200 is apparent in this game. Voodoo based systems will run the game quickly and look just about as good in the process.

SIM-TASTIC

We ran a simulation on both *TNT* and *High Heat* up until home 9th (about right now). You judge which is more accurate.

Triple Play 2000

FIRST PLACE: Boston 44-39, Detroit 33-31, Anaheim 36-28, Atlanta 45-21, Houston 39-25, Colorado 40-26

ODDITIES: Yankees and Indians have worse records than the Detroit Tigers. huh?

High Heat 2000

FIRST PLACE: New York 45-36, Cleveland 39-22, Oakland 32-30, Atlanta 45-21, Houston 37-27, San Francisco 33-30

ODDITIES: Detroit Tigers over .500 again. Maybe they know something we don't



Know your pitcher. When he's on, he's really on.



High Heat 2000

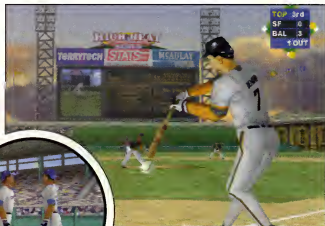
killer game!

PC Baseball finally comes of age

Last year, if we had one complaint about sports games it would clearly be that none of the baseball offerings dazzled us. However, the best of the bunch was *High Heat Baseball*, the first title from Team 366 Studios. It played better and felt more like real baseball than any other game on the market, but we knocked it for featuring old school 2D graphics. This year, the upstart sports developer brought its new franchise into the world of 3D, and in the process, firmly established *High Heat* as the name in PC baseball.

In the heart of *High Heat* 2000 flows the blood of true baseball fanaticism. You can see it in the way the game treats every aspect of the game with reverence. For instance, take a look at the pitcher/batter showdown. You can actually read the pitches (thanks to great animation), making you actually feel like a major league batter.

Occasionally things look a little fake (the fastballs float and the curves feel soft), but in the case of *High Heat*, it still works. Add a great pitching system that forces you to manage your pitchers extremely carefully (lest they tire out and lose control), and you have a face-off that is without par in PC baseball.



The players may not look perfect, but nothing beats *High Heat's* pitching and batting.

While the pitcher/batter showdown is finely-tuned, the rest of the control is a touch clunky. Running down fly balls feels unexciting, and base running is often an exercise in frustration, due to slow character animations which takes the speed out of fast chase downs and releases. But other than that, the gameplay works as a simple, yet enjoyable, arcade baseball game.

However, *High Heat* is much more than a simple arcade game. Aside from a few baserunning glitches (stealing home is FAR too easy, especially against Rob, for example), the game and AI will satisfy even the most finicky of baseball fans.

High Heat also has a sophisticated simulation engine that is as deep, if not deeper, than dedicated management sims like *Baseball Mogul*. Diehard baseball fans will find themselves chugging through seasons using the simulation mode alone, sending ragged veterans back to the minors, mortgaging their future for a left-handed bat, and sitting Tony Gwynn for the last four games to make sure he grabs the batting crown. All of this is done in an easy to use, but exhaustive interface that keeps a world of realistic stats and details close at hand.

Whether you just want a fun, enjoyable baseball game, or a deep, realistic simulation title, this is your game. In fact, if you are looking for the best PC baseball game on the market today, well, *High Heat 2000* is, without a doubt, the game for you.

GRAPHICS

The players and stadiums look good, but certainly not spectacular.

SOUND

The play by play is drab, but sound otherwise does its job.

CONTROL

Base-running is a little weak, but the pitcher/batter duel is unparalleled.

REALISM

No baseball game comes close to the level of realism in this game.

RATING 9

+ Pluses

- Great statistics engine
- Excellent AI
- Feels like real baseball

- Minuses

- Baserunning is clunky
- Slow animations affect gameplay
- Not much variety in player animations

EVERQUEST

PCXL'S GUIDE TO SURVIVING THE MEAN STREETS OF NORRATH

A giant, megalithic game. A time-consuming, life-destroying, hopelessly addictive game. At times, a frustrating, non-responding, laggified, pointless exercise in futility. Or, the world's largest online petting zoo. Any way you look at it, *Everquest* is frickin' huge. For those who have already lost hours to *Norrath* or if you just want to know more before entering, check out our guide to surviving this thing we call life ... er, EQ.

CREATING A CHARACTER

First, a small "congratulations" is in order for actually getting the game up and running. Choosing which character to create is a big-assed decision and one that you should definitely research and prepare for in advance. Since character classes are well defined with

clear specialties, you really should think about the long run, especially considering the giant time investment. Pick a class first, then weigh the upside/downside of each of the available races. The idea of playing an Ogre warrior, smashing and bashing everything in sight, may sound good now, but remember that you won't be able to go near any non-evil city for your entire life. And, you learn skills slowly because you're dumber than a bag of hammers. Well, all of a sudden joining the ranks of the Ogre warrior doesn't sound so good. On the other hand, a Halfling warrior may be a tough sell, with its low strength and stamina, but remember that



Woolly mammoths should not be attacked at 1st level.

you've got a much higher agility and dexterity than the bigger races — translating into much better defense. (Check the sidebar for our favorite race/class combos.) The important thing to bear in mind is that every race/class combo in the game is a viable one, but some are more difficult to make work than others.

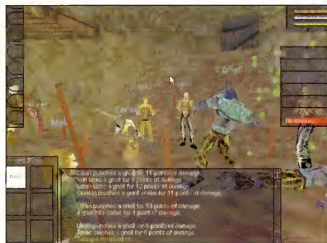
At the beginning, don't use any of your practice points. Stockpile a bunch for later levels (9th+). Don't spend any points on combat skills, since they go up pretty quickly by themselves, just by wailing on every rodent in sight. Keep track of what skills you're aiming to learn when you hit their level requirement; then, when you



Behold the evil skeleton.



The crowds at the evil petting zoo get really crazy this time of year.



An evil goblin gets his ...

hit that level, train just one point in that skill. Save at least some of those five practices per level for a skill you really need to be good at right away, like Backstab for rogues, or Feign Dead for monks.

LEARNING SPELLS

Once you memorize your given spells, keep using 'em, because you'll want to improve your casting skills in the five different types of magic. Put one skill point into the important Channeling skill at first. Check your guild for higher level spells and find out which level is your next rank, that is, when you can cast the next group of spells. Find out how much the ones you want will cost ya, and save up.

YOUR FIRST KILL

Always "consider" stuff before attacking it with the "c" hotkey (or right-clicking on your intended target). This is a pretty important habit to get into — if the response is in red, then don't attack, move away — fast. Which reminds me — don't put any two frequently-used hotkeys too close together on the keyboard or you may hit one when you mean to hit the other. (One time instead of saying "hi" to an NPC I took a swing at him. I was mashed seven times before I hit the ground.) Hoard all the loot you get your hands on, and stack it if it's the cheap shit. Every bit of copper counts, especially if you're a spellcasting class.

CASTING SPELLS

With your eight slots you should assemble a good set of all-purpose spells that cover offense, defense, and utility options. With offensive spells you'll get interrupted quite a bit at first, but you'll also get a sense of how to time your spells between enemy attacks. Also, improving the Channeling skill will make it less likely that you will be interrupted. Remember that you have to be standing still to cast, and remain standing still until it's finished (that is, until you've increased your Channeling skill to a point that lets you cast on the move).

IMPROVING YOUR SKILLS

With repeated use comes improvement. Be aware that your Intelligence rating directly affects how quickly you learn. If you're not the brightest bulb, you will have to rely more on training for important skills that aren't advancing fast enough to keep up with your character level. Keep an eye out for equipment that raises your IQ.

SELLING YOUR LOOT

Never forget that your race will make a difference in how much you pay for certain items. Even in your starting city, check out a few merchants until you find one that gives the best price and keep going back. Don't go for the ones who have an obvious beef that you're not the same race as they. (Wow, it's like metaphors for real life.) When you can afford it, buy a backpack (around six gold, or potentially free from Gnomp pups) so you can tote around more loot before heading back to sell it all.

QUESTS

The second part of the game's name is really what hooks you into the Norrath mythology. Money, experience, armor, and weapons are some of the stuff you can get. The basic procedure is pretty simple: Find a named NPC, target them, and hail 'em. (You may have to type their name in if it doesn't insert it automatically.) They'll say



Any evil quests here?

GUILDS

One of the biggest criticisms leveled at EQ so far has been the relative lack and unimportance of social interaction, which is contrary to massi ... oops, I almost said "massively multiplayer." Going solo is fun and challenging, but it can get old. That's where guilds come in. Kinda like clans in other games, these are a collection of players who will assist each other and share resources. They have pretty detailed hierarchies in most cases and there are many examples of these on the main EQ fan site, EQVault (www.eqvault.com). The official rules require 10 players to be in your guild, and that all members play on the same server. You may have to pay dues, join hunting parties, and attend meetings, but if you're willing to put up with it, you can also get good equipment and gold out of it, not to mention powerful allies.

something, sometimes with a word or phrase in brackets. This is what you need to respond with in the form of a question (like "Jeopardy") or a statement. For example, someone will mention that they have a "package" that needs to be delivered. You could ask "What package?" or if that doesn't work, something like "I will deliver the package." Occasionally, and infuriatingly, the exact phrasing is very important, so pay attention to how they say it. The names are case-sensitive as well. Quests are scattered all over and more are being added all the time, so run around the city and hail away. There is always a newbie quest



It's hard to tell what's going on here, but it looks like it hurts.



Look, it's the evil city. Yeah.

and a mid-level quest in every guild — so make pals with the people who are helping you out.

DEATH

Deal with it. You will die and die often, but if you're level three or lower, it's no biggie. Take a chance on monsters at levels 1-5 since you won't lose any experience by dying until level 6. One command that may save you much grief is the "/corpse" instruction. This will summon your corpse to you, but you have to be within 30 feet of it. If you get killed by an aggro monster or NPC who is not moving away from your corpse, have someone cast invisibility on you and slowly "drag" your corpse away using the "/corpse" com-



Here someone rids the world of an evil snake.

mand. As soon as you take an action like looting it, you instantly become visible.

Another potential disaster is the disappearing corpse bug, which will make your corpse visible to everyone except you. In this case, take your chances with "/petition" (yeah right) or "/consent" someone you trust to loot your corpse for you and hand your stuff to you.

FOOD & WATER

Scrounging for food as cheaply as possible or for free will go a long way towards saving up your pennies and nickels for something good. First off, don't spend more than six copper on food or water. If you must, buy the regular ration which should be around one silver. Always keep an eye out for snake eggs, which are about six copper each. The best bet for food is to kill lots of snakes and snaffle the eggs. Also, buy milk instead of water for around six copper. Goes good with Oreos, too.

GROUPING UP

Eventually (after level five) you'll want to join up with some other players in order to take down monsters that are more powerful and who have better loot. A typical party breakdown would be a fighter, healer, and offensive caster. Increase the numbers while keeping the ratio about the same for some serious firepower. Use the channels to announce your intentions to form or join a group, or send "tells" to others around your level. Remember, it doesn't pay off to group with someone more than a couple of levels above or below you, especially at lower levels.

EXPLORING

After hitting level four or five, and getting familiar with the layout of your starting stomping grounds, you should start thinking about moving on and seeing what's out there. A mid-level zone, whether it's a dungeon or an outdoors area, shouldn't be too far away. Ask some players who are a little higher level than you where to head. For example, near Qeynos there's Blackburrow (the home of the gnolls) and the Plains of Karana. Don't be afraid to do some exploring. It's a good rush, and if you're worried about losing your stuff, stash it all in the bank before you set off.

THE FIVE-SECOND STRATEGY: KILLING RATS

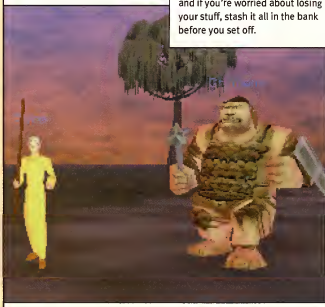
Everquest (sometimes referred to as *Rat Hunter 3D*) does seem to have quite the vermin problem in its cities. Here's a guide for how to best kill the foul rodents:

- Not all rats are created equal. That docile rodent, scurrying happily along, may look like a garden-variety Large Rat, but the possibility exists that it may be a Giant, Mangy, or Sewer Rat, since the three look very similar.
- When approaching a rat, stand a few feet away and prepare to swing with a sudden downward strike. Don't worry if your avatar doesn't make contact with the rat, you're still hitting it.
- Once engaged in combat, keep swinging away and offer a prayer to

Orkila, the goddess of rat slaying, for her to smile upon you.

→ Rats have a tendency to leave behind bits of claws and fur that you can sell for loot. Some rats mysteriously lack these goodies, however. These mutated, clawless, and furless rats were begging to be put out of their misery anyway.

→ Above all else, do not attack the Giant Plague Rat unless you are high level and are pure of body and spirit. These foul beasts are not to be trifled with and will kill you eight times before you hit the ground.



Don't try killing these until higher (to +) levels.

COMBOS ... NOT THE CHEEZY PRETZEL KIND

What follows are some of our favorite combos:

DWARF PALADIN

Dwarves have great physical stats, and excellent starting wisdom, making them natural choices for paladins. They start out slow but once they get their spells and such they really start rolling. In the long



We say this is just wrong.

run, they are among the most powerful classes in the game because some of the best weapons and equipment are paladin/shadowlight only. "Lay On Hands" is a terrific skill for soloing tough monsters and will save your ass many many times. Don't forget that being a Dwarf means you can wear cheaper small-sized armor.

HALF-ELF RANGER

Clearly, this race is made to be rangers. Decent starting stats (more agile than a Human and stronger than a Wood Elf), with a good starting location (outside Qeynos), great in melee, cool abilities like Track, Druid spells at level 9 — overall a good solid fighting

class. They're completely at home in the outdoors, which is handy as that's where most of the adventuring takes place.

GNOME NECROMANCER

You get good starting stats as a Gnome, with the best physical stats of all the necros. You also get the benefit of not getting whaled on by guards in every city. — and you get invisibility to boot. So overall, it's our choice for a necro if you want to actually go to cities. If visiting towns isn't a big deal to you, a dark elf makes a slightly better choice because of their better stats.

HUMAN MONK

Monks are a lot like warriors, and match them for pure melee power.



Mmm, monk babes.

However, they can't use the vast majority of equipment in the game. They make up for it with cool special attacks like Roundhouse Kick and Dragon Punch. The Mend skill heals 25% of your health instantly, while the Feign Death skill can save your life many times. A viable soloing class, the Human monk's main weakness might be the inability to see in the dark.

Upgrade your experience

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Adjustable resistance on wheel

Ergonomic, stable floor pedals

Adjustable resistance on pedals

Fast action stick shift or paddle shifts

Feel the road through the wheel with the ultimate "force feedback" wheel. Incorporates Microsoft® on board force processor for full tactile response. And it's game port plug and play — no messy serial connections. Unparalleled ergonomics for lasting driving comfort puts you firmly in the drivers seat.

An exceptional value.

R4 Force Feedback Wheel

for use with all PC games ideal for all 3D games

Powered by Microsoft® Force Feedback™ Technology

Digital

Saitek

It's time to upgrade

What really is the best gaming platform?

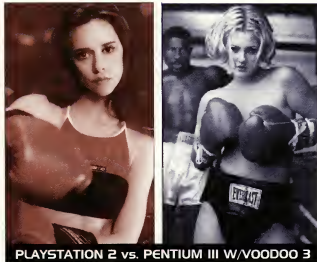
(and no, the Mac doesn't count)

Convergence: It's a big scary word that we don't like to throw around because it smacks too much of respectability. We'd rather throw big piles of doggy doo at the wall and watch it slide down. It means, by the way, that boundaries between gaming platforms such as the PC, Dreamcast, and even the red-headed stepchild that is the Mac, will become meaningless as you'll be able to play the same games on all of 'em.

There are two reasons why convergence has been on our minds lately. One is the big announcement from Sony that there will be a PlayStation 2, and yes, it will rock. Some people were still trying to get over the shock of the first part, and when the full extent of the second part of the statement became clear, well, nerds were having seizures all over the place.

The PlayStation 2: It can cure the common cold! The only new console that can cut through a tin can — and a shoe! Or so you'd believe, from all the wide-eyed hype that's been shouted from the rooftops lately, mostly from the segment of the Internet population who are still debating the burning question "Who was better, Kirk or Picard?" As a, uh ... PC games mag (yes, that's what we are, we keep forgetting), we feel obligated to give you a completely biased look at the whole pile o' vapor (much like the Giants play-by-play announcers who might try to sound impartial, but you know who they want to win).

Let's start with an intimidating glare at the numbers to see how much the PSX2 is going to, allegedly, kick the PIII's ass by:



SPEED

PSX2: 75 million polys/second

PIII: 6 million polys/second

Verdict: 69 million polys/second faster — sheee-it!

CPU

PSX2: 128 bit, 300 Mhz

PIII: 32 bit, 400-600 Mhz

Verdict: Again, no contest — even though the PIII has the higher clock speed, the PSX2's 128 bit architecture is much, much faster

RAM

PSX2: 32 MB RAM

PIII: 64-256+ MB RAM

Verdict: PC will always win the RAM wars, but the PSX2's 32 MB is much better than the PlayStation's paltry 3 MB

PLAYABLE RESOLUTION

PSX2: 640x480 (if you own a high definition TV)

PIII: 1600 X 1200

Verdict: No console will ever be able to provide resolutions like a PC and therefore will always be inferior in at least one area

VAPORWARE FACTOR

PSX2: Christmas 2000 if all is to be believed

PIII: Out now

Verdict: The numbers for PSX2 are gaudy but by the time it is released and reduced to affordable hardware, the high-end PC will be very comparable (and may even include the exact Sony chip)

IT'S ALL IN THE GAMES

Well, what do those numbers tell you, other than the PSX2 is gonna be helluva fast (like you wouldn't have guessed that already)? The PSX2 hauls major ass, and it's the first console to be an exponential, rather than an incremental, step above its predecessor. Sure, it's got some things going for it like tons of hardware special effects and true 128-bit architecture, but the point is, and always has been, the games. We at PCXL are all over the Tekken 4s and the Star Wars RPGs, but we wouldn't play an FPS on that thing if you paid us.

The things that will hold the PSX2 back in the minds of hardcore FPS players (which, as we all know, are the cream of the crop) are the controller and the resolution. You've got a control stick and some buttons, which just don't cut it in *Quake*, and you're watching it on a TV with a maximum resolution of what, 320 x 240? Meanwhile, PC gamers will be doin' it up in style, playing *Quake III Arena* with the mouse against a bunch of human opponents at 1600 x 1200 resolution. Come to think of it, we wouldn't play an RTS on a TV for pretty much the same reasons. Hey, those are two of our favorite genres — genres which we won't



Not shabby for a console, but Drew Barrymore looks better.

be needing a PSX2 for. Our prediction? In response to PSX2, PC games will become more dependent on high resolutions and graphical detail.

The elements that Sony's new spawn is contributing to this convergence thing are a potential doozy. It seems they're letting it be known they want to start testing out the motherboard market. This is a natural step for them — if they've already got all this production and distribution muscle that they can actually turn a profit on these beasts, then getting into the PC market shouldn't be that much of a problem. Intel's unofficial response to this somewhat daunting challenge: "Whatever."



And the Best Gaming Platform is ... Drew Barrymore?

PLAYSTATION 2 - FORM AND FUNCTION



Neither of these are what the PSX2 will look like, oh well ...

Speaking from a PCXL standpoint, if they can get the PSX2 hardware into a more open-ended, configurable and upgradable (key) situation, tweak it so it runs PC games, and get it a monitor and mouse, you've got our attention. Expect there to be some kind of rumblings in this area, if only in Japan to start.

The second thing that's going on in convergence news, is all the emulators that are being developed. They allow you to play one platform's games on another. Putting aside the fact that they are completely illegal unless sanctioned by the parent company, they are dissolving the boundaries

between consoles and putting the focus where it should be — on the games. The Bleem! PSX emulator for Mac is headed for the PC, the UltraHLE made waves with its impressive conversions of the likes of *Mario 64* and *Zelda 64* for Voodoo-equipped Pentiums (until it got throttled by Nintendo's lawyers), and an official N64 emulator for the PC is rumored to be in the works (mmm ... *Zelda 64* on the PC ... at 1024 x 768 40fps ...). And of course you've got Dreamcast, which was for a short time the golden child of the console industry, with its PowerVR graphics (PC port city) and such. Now that PSX2 has officially said "sit down" to Sega, Dreamcast's future isn't looking quite as set — especially since the PowerVR people seem to be waiting for some cosmic event before they'll actually release their next line of boards. Anyone remember what it was called?

Maybe one day we'll all be playing *Quake 7: Total Frickin' Annihilation* on one unified game machine. But until that slightly creepy Orwellian future, we'll rest easy knowing that the PC still has the best games.

Every weekday on our website we'll give away the best music as a gift, and occasionally we'll give something just because it's hard to find. Find out what we're giving today on www.pcxl.com. You'll come to the frigs, but you'll play for the CRAZY NEWS AND BABES.

THE POWER METER

Once again, we bring you the guys who are making waves in the gaming community, duking it out for the coveted #1 spot.

THIS MONTH	LAST MONTH	REVIEW
1	3	LUCASARTS → <i>Star Wars</i> — "nuff said, LucasArts will clean up in the fallout of the movie's opening. ELECTRONIC ARTS → Getting major mainstream coverage by using its Jane's sims to illustrate the Kosovo conflict. And there's rumor of a <i>Quake III: Arena</i> engine license being added to a James Bond game.
2	1	HASBRO → <i>MechWarrior 3</i> is looking awesome, and other former Microprose games are keeping this indie and mainstream publisher in fashion with the more hardcore crowd. NVIDIA → <i>TK2</i> is scoring points with decent performance numbers and tons of manufacturer support.
3	-	WAL-MART → If you're a <i>SinCity</i> 3000, <i>Deer Hunter</i> , or <i>Frogger</i> , you're fine and likely to find your game topping the charts, but 3D-only games may suffer their powerful sway.
4	6	METABYTE → The little guy working on original technologies, making navigating the minefield of 3D accelerated graphics simpler for low Average.
5	5	ID → They simply can't be ignored. Whatever ID does, everyone else follows.
6	7	ACTIVISION → Having been nowhere in sight for a while, their <i>Q4</i> line-up has some impressive titles, headlined by <i>Quake: Arena</i> and <i>Star Trek: Voyager</i> using <i>Q4</i> Arno's engine.
7	10	VERANT INTERACTIVE → The 985 Studios spin-off has scored massive success with <i>Everquest</i> , and extended the first month free deal by two weeks.
8	-	INTERPLAY → Their resurgence is being led with the <i>King of Kings</i> . <i>Gladius</i> will be a major hit, plus the <i>Star Trek</i> games and <i>Ploescape</i> give them genuine hope.
9	-	
10	+	

OTHER CONTENTS

ACCOLADE → *Redline* nearly gave Accolade a spot. *Slow Zero* is looking like great fun but their franchise *Test Drive* games need major work for the PC.

GT INTERACTIVE → Internal problems, a major relocation — there's a sense of uncertainty in the air.

FANTASY FRAG

DONNY AND MARIE OSMOND

WHY WE HATE THEM → Just when you thought the world was safe from this blatantly incestuous, formerly holy rolling duo, they're back. They were scary enough back in the '70s when they ice skated into our lives with their wretched song about being a little bit country and a little bit rock and roll. Now all they are is more than a little bit frightening. What's scarier is that, over 20 years later, these wax creatures look virtually the same — freakishly toothy. Conclusion: They are the Anti-Christ (or in Mormon speak, the Anti-Josh Smiths).

HOW THEY SHOULD BE FRAGGED → They should be overthrown by their even creepier younger brother Jimmy, who would send them to Mormon Heaven and stage a variety show called "The Dead Donny and Morbid Marie Show," where the next generation of freaks would perform smiling tap dances on the graves of their deceased relatives. (It would be just as tasteful, more lively, and far more entertaining than anything they've ever done before. And in some strange way they still would be more normal than the Jackson clan.)



PCXL Clone Awards

JUST WHO'S GETTING IT RIGHT?

As a service to our unanointed competition here is a look at their blatant efforts to rip off our style. We are flattered by the inspiration and hope our hints and tips can make their magazines more like ours (don't even think that we'd move toward "respectability"). If you find more examples of people ripping off PCXL, just send them to pcxlclonist@pcxl.com.

(Magazine names have been changed to protect the incredibly guilty)

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE UGLY

Magazine: Computer Gaming Planet
First appeared: May 1999
Thinly-veiled rip off of: The Heat-Of-Melee
Success: 6 of 10. The use of obviously unlicensed celebrity pictures is spot-on (they used Picard for the good, Jerry Falwell for the bad, and Pet for the ugly) and the layout was nifty.
PCXL Tips: Using Picard as an example of good is just plain wrong. If you are going to use unlicensed photography of celebrities you MUST have cleavage. It would also help if the stories were helpful, informative, or entertaining. Any one of the three would be nice.

OR FUNNY

Magazine: PC... (short)
First appeared: April '99
Thinly-veiled rip off of: X-TRA
Success: 5 of 10. "...there are funny gamers out there and I happen to be one of 'em. In fact, Dr. Funny's my middle name." Telling people you are funny is inherently not funny. At all.
PCXL Tips: Some decent tangent writing, but devoting a "funny" page is just stupid. How about putting the humor throughout the magazine instead?

TCHOCKE OF THE MONTH

Magazine: Computer Gaming Planet
First appeared: May '99
Thinly-veiled rip off of: Women We Love
Success: 5 of 10. All five points go for the proper spelling of tchocke — it's the only reason we didn't name our section the same way back in September of last year.
PCXL Tips: Game-related freebies aren't funny or even interesting. Additionally, the question of credibility must arise when you do a cover story on a game one month, and then the next issue you get a "totally badass" (wow, they are so "extreme") weapon from the same company. Makes you go, hummm.

WHAT'S NEXT...

Thinly-veiled rip off of: Folio Follies
Why: Reading magazines sideways has been scientifically-proven to dramatically raise serotonin levels (test was done with an issue of Playboy)
What they will call it: Flip Dicks (which we would have called it that — doh)

ARENA: ARENA

The announcement that the sequel to *Turok 2* won't be named *Turok 3*, but instead sport the catchy moniker *Turok: Arena*, shocked most who heard it into a catatonic stupor at the stunning and total lack of creative thought. But after we recovered, we thought, why single out Acclaim for badwagon-jumping when after all, that's what the FPS industry is based on? PCXL has learned of some other prospective "multiplayer-focused" sequels in the works, and to all we say, "Bravo!"

DARKSTONE: SHADOW VENGEANCE MASTER: REVENGE OF THE DARK SHADOWSTONE'S DARK STONE SHADOW II: THE DARKENING: ARENA

Reason for abandoning the single player game: Wanted to lighten things up a bit (har-de-har-har! Just call me "Dr. Funny!")
Main multiplayer improvements: New weapons include the Grim Scythe Of Death and the Somewhat-Dark-and-Gritty Laser-Guided Napalm Flamethrower
Their excuse for copying Quake III: Arena: "Quote III: Arena only wishes it was as Dark as Darkstone: SVM: RDTSDSSS: TD: At Stick that in your bowl and smoke it, you'd smart asses"

DEER HUNTER: ARENA
Reason for abandoning SP: Shooting deer proved too challenging for most purchasers
Main multiplayer improvements: Thinning out hunter population — they can do it in the game so they won't have to in real life. Um... maybe this isn't an improvement after all.
Their excuse for copying Q3A: "This isn't copying. It's only natural that the progression of the Deer Hunter experience moves into the multiplayer-only arena. Is that my beer?" (runs away)



LINKS: ARENA

Reason for abandoning SP: Whoever heard of playing golf by themselves? It doesn't happen in the real world, so why should it happen in this game?
Main multiplayer improvements: Improved interface makes it easier to find servers with the lowest ping, and sorts by game type. Also, a new "Trash talking" taunt system has been added.
Their excuse for copying Q3A: "People are constantly looking for new experiences from their game of Links. With Links: Arena, we hope to give them what they want: A chance to try out their best insults while whittling away time in the world's most boring sport"

MYST: ARENA

Reason for abandoning SP: The puzzles were just not challenging for the developers to make anymore.
Main multiplayer improvements: Whoever figures out the tricky base-12 math puzzle last falls in a vat of acid.
Their excuse for copying Q3A: "We got so much flack from our marketing department for calling the sequel *Reven* instead of *Myst 2* that we felt we had to make it up to them"

SIMCITY: ARENA

Reason for abandoning SP: Felt finer points of neighboring city warfare were unappreciated.
Main multiplayer improvements: Players now able to record deeds of their greatest fears — who says *SimCity* isn't a spectator sport!
Their excuse for copying Q3A: "Copying is such a harsh word, what about 'borrowing the best elements and improving on'?"



SIN: ARENA

Reason for abandoning SP: No one played through it all anyway.
Main multiplayer improvements: Cuts installation size from 600 MB to a trim 550 MB; bigger bath tub for masturbation scene, and, Alexis is naked this time (even the heels come off).
Their excuse for copying Q3A: "It was either *Sin: Arena*, *Sin: Tournament*, or find a new job"



SOLITAIRE: ARENA
Reason for abandoning SP: Wanted to leave the single-player card experience to those who could do it better.
Main multiplayer improvements: 32-bit color, curved surfaces, and a weapon that may or may not be a BFG type.
Their excuse for copying Q3A: "I don't know if what we're doing can be considered copying in the classic sense, since they are such different genres... hey, isn't that Jennifer Aniston over there?" (runs away)

STAR WARS REBELLION: ARENA
Reason for abandoning SP: Entire team forced to repent for inflicting the original *Rebellion* on the world.
Main multiplayer improvements: Maximum number of simultaneous pop-up windows limited to 2,000.
Their excuse for copying Q3A: "Can't talk, I'm too busy closing and moving windows... then I have an appointment with a length of rope and a chair"

TOMB RAIDER: ARENA
Reason for abandoning SP: Parent company Eidos feels that after three games "the time is right" to try this crazy "multiplayer" thing the kids are talking about.
Main multiplayer improvements: Latency will be kept in check by reducing on-screen poly count, which will mostly consist of Lara's breasts. In a potential drawback, too much lag could render Lara with completely concave breasts, which would leave Eidos without a game.
Their excuse for copying Q3A: "At Eidos we don't make excuses. We only make one thing, and that's kick-ass original games"

UNREAL: TOURNAMENT
Reason for abandoning SP: Didn't feel like putting in the work.
Main multiplayer improvements: You can actually play it over the Internet.
Their excuse for copying Q3A: "We thought of it before they did, so there"



Lara about to go 4 on 1 in a new Vivid film.

THE WOMEN WE LOVE TO PLAY

DEVIL WOMAN
(ANDARIEL)

Do you ever wonder why so many of our Women We Love to Play are evil? Frankly, we'd like to know ourselves. Perhaps it is that evil women have a higher body temperature and thereby need fewer clothes. Or perhaps exposed breasts enhances the nature of evilness. Or, maybe game developers realize they can fit more half-naked women into a game if they make them the bad guys. Whatever the case, we have two solid rules at PCXL, if they're fit and barely dressed, they've got a great shot at making this page, and this demonesse straight from the pits of Hades in *Diablo II* meets both those criteria. Enjoy at your own risk ...

THE NAKED EQUATION

Does rampant nakedness and general scariness correlate? To find out, we put our theory to the test with four leading actresses, comparing their naked roles to other non-naked endeavors



NAKED ROLES → *Last Seduction, Jude*
NON-NAKED ROLE → *Men in Black*
CONCLUSION → Much scarier in naked roles and also much, much, more watchable



NAKED ROLES → *Strip tease, G.I. Jane, The Scarlet Letter*
NON-NAKED ROLE → *U2, unknown*
CONCLUSION → Inconclusive, until she's in a movie where she doesn't get naked



NAKED ROLES → *Basic Instinct*
NON-NAKED ROLE → *Gladiator*
CONCLUSION → It is getting stabbed with an ice-pick is no more frightening than the thought of watching Gladi



NAKED ROLES → *Poison Ivy*
NON-NAKED ROLE → *The Wedding Singer*
CONCLUSION → Much more frightening in naked role (Disturbing love scene with psychotic Tom Skerritt)

GAMESCAN
BRING OUT YER DEAD!

Dead celebrities are like video games. Some are stiff, stinky, and ugly. Okay, so maybe dead celebrities aren't anything like games. We contacted Kenny Kingston, psychic to the stars, to put us in touch with famous spirits for these mini-previews.



AMA SUPERBIKE

Developer → *Motorsims*
Publisher → *Motorsims*
Release Date → Spring '99
Product → *Motorsims* has made an online motorcycle racing game for the hardcore enthusiast (like the AMA's 232,000 members). Opponents will be matched based on skill, but there is a "buddy list" option for racing friends, if they race at your skill level, that is, LAN support is iffy.



Dead Celebrity → *Jimmy Stewart*
Kenny: "A poem, Sweet Spirit!"
Jimmy:

"Oh, *AMA Superbike*
Your realm I do like
But will you be o' flossh-in the pan
If I can't play you over o' LAN?"



SANITY

Developer → *Monolith*
Publisher → *Monolith*
Release Date → Fall '99
Product → A third person, Isometric game using the Ulltech engine, in which the player assumes the role of a pyro-kinetic government agent on the hunt for psychic psychos (if such a thing exists). Picture



Corrie versus the baddies in *Scanners*.

Dead Celebrity → *Phil Hartman*
Kenny: "Please tell us about *Sanity*, Sweet Sp..."

Phil: "Ask my wife! Run for your life, or that coked-up bitch will shoot you in the head, too! If I could make people burst into flames, I would've had a barbecue, not a wedding."

**HEAVY GEAR 2**

Developer → Activision

Publisher → Activision

Release Date → Winter '99

Product → The sequels keep on comin' with this follow-up to the original Heavy Gear that asks the musical question, "Do we really



need another giant armored robot game not called Mechwarrior 3?" The answer appears to be yes, as this 3D-card-only game will have you exploring new planets and commanding squads, all in the name of blowing stuff up.

Dead Celebrity → Chris Farley

Kenney "Fat split, what do you see for the future of Heavy Gear 2?" **Chris** "A 350 pound drug-bloated corpse? Stupid! Stupid! What the hell was I thinking? At least that little prick David Spade won't have a career without me ... oh, damn ..."

**SEPTERRA CORE**

Developer → Valkyrie Studios

Publisher → Monolith

Release Date → Christmas '99

Product → Exciting, not only because it mixes the RPG genre with the world of anime, but because it is designed by the creators of *Beavis and Butt-head* in *Virtual Stupidity*. The plot focuses on



seven continents that float around a living computer core. It sounds *Final Fantasy*-esque, but expect more humor.

Dead Celebrity → Sonny Bono **Kenney** "Spectre of song remove your head from that tree and tell us about *Septerra Core*."

Sonny "Man, Cher and I were doing anime RPG stuff way back in the '60s, but nobody would listen. If I were producing it, *Septerra Core* would be a star, man!"

THE 25 LEAST IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN THE VIDEOGAME INDUSTRY

You know the movers, you've heard about the shakers, and if you're reading this fine mag, you're even familiar with the power behind the power, but have you ever wondered about the guys that matter the *least* in the videogame industry? Probably not, but we think about it all the time, and after months of research, we've gathered the comprehensive list of these people (with our names carefully chopped off the top, of course).

ID STORY WRITER**25. Shining moment:**

Scripting the complex arrangement of grunts in the climactic level of *Quake II*

Example of his work:[Excerpt from original *Quake II* script]

Marine: Arrgh (Translation: Why must we fight? Can't we just exchange ideas from our respective cultures and live in peace?)

Cyberdemon: Rrrrrrr (Translation: I must apologize, but my socio-political upbringing will not allow that kind of exchange.)

Marine: Arrgh (fires rocket launcher at the alien's butt)

LUCASARTS NEW CHARACTER DESIGNER**24. Shining moment:**

Creating utterly forgettable Star Wars characters such as Kyle Katarn for *Dark Forces*

Example of his work:

[Excerpt from memo to artists]

I have worked very hard to make this character as bland and forgettable as humanly possible. This is a difficult task, considering we have the greatest movie license in creation

SIN'S CODE COMPRESSOR**23. Shining moment:**

Creating a game that requires as much memory space for a single save as most games take for their entire code

Example of work:[sample file sizes] Things *Sin Stole*from *Quake*: 125 MBThings *Sin Stole* from *Duke Nukem*:

118 MB

Other Crap (including save games):

635 MB

3D TERRAIN ARTIST FOR SSI**22. Shining moment:**

Created cool 2D terrain that represented 3D landscapes through a complex hexagonal format

Example of his work:

His best work is clearly in SSI's now classic title, *Boring Generals* in *Boring Wars*, where he actually re-created the entire cast of "M*A*S*H" using only 2D hexagons

EVERQUEST BOSS AI PROGRAMMER**21. Shining moment:**

Creating an incredibly complex Dragon, hidden deep within the secret dungeon of the

Dark Elves — only nobody will ever see the Dragon because they are too busy killing rodents, varmints, and giant walking trees

Example of his work:[Boss AI routine from *Everquest*]

[If player enters room, ask: "What are you doing here? You should be killing rats. I am far more powerful than you."]

[If player refuses to leave, run Emergency Program Alpha]

[Emergency Program Alpha = Close connection and replace game screen with "Server Not Responding" screen]

BLIZZARD GAME SCHEDULER**20. Shining moment:**

Scheduling four separate release dates for *StarCraft* and only getting one of them right

Example of his work:

Blizzard only releases one game each and every year, but the release date changes several times

STRATEGY GUIDE WRITER FOR SOUTH PARK**19. Shining moment:**

Actually writing a page of text describing how to frag a malnourished Ethiopian child

Example of work:

[First draft of strategy guide]

If something moves, shoot it

[Writer's note: The other 118 pages will be filled with screenshots and jokes about talking feces]

EA SPORTS RANDOM-MARKETING-PHRASE CREATOR**18. Shining moment:**

Creating the phrases "Liquid AI" and "V-Polygons"

Example of his work:

[Marketing phrases that almost made the cut]

"Really, We Promise It's Better than Last Year Graphics Engine!"
"Half-Assed Roster Update"
"I Can't Believe They're Not Polygons"

PC GAMING 'NEWS' SITE EDITOR**17. Shining moment:**

Copying a website, who had already copied another, who just posted a rumor

Example of work:

GameShack Exclusive: We heard an interesting story today on www.TNTxtreme.com, who heard it on www.pc-hut.com, who saw it on www.game-lover.com, who read it off www.quekepo.com, who first got it off www.gameshack.com ... oh, never mind

MOTION CAPTURER FOR MYST**16. Shining moment:**

Motion capturing butterflies — the only moving creatures in *Myst*

Example of work:

Only the butterflies ...

DIRECTOR OF PRODUCT INNOVATION FOR EIDOS

15. Shining moment:

The Eidos early 1999 lineup is a collection of games with descriptions that start with "It plays like..."

Example of work:

Using the phrase "Just like *Diablo*" 37 times while describing *Revenant*

BREAST MODELER FOR CORE

14. Shining moment:

Reducing the size of Lara's jugs in *Tomb Raider III*

Example of his work:

[Memo to TR III Producer]

At long last, I have discovered what male gamers want — shapelier calves. I will have to reduce the size of Lara's breasts by 65 percent to make it work. But nobody notices her breasts, right?

PCXL STANDARDS AND PRACTICES

13. Shining moment:

Letting us print the Elexis self-love story

Example of work:

[Daily Dialogue]

Mike Salmon: "Uh, can we run this picture of Pamela Anderson naked?" Standards and Practices: "I'll leave this up to your discretion" Mike Salmon: "Thanks, sucker!" (runs away, laughing maniacally)

WAL-MART GAME SPECIALIST

12. Shining moment:

Whenever he can help a new gamer find the one game that will turn him away from gaming forever

Example of work:

Explaining to a newbie why *Deer Hunter* is a much better game than *Half-Life*

THE GUY WHO SCANNED HIS TESTICLES INTO SIN

11. Shining moment:

Getting his name and testicles into a real videogame

Example of work:

[Excerpt from job description] "You must have three years experience in texture design, a college degree, and a willingness to put your family jewels on a hot glass plate"

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER AT EA

10. Shining moment:

Having his name listed among the 312 producers in charge of *Modden Football*

Example of work:

Work? At EA, if you can wear a sports jacket and attend enough meetings, you too can be an Associate Producer

ASSISTANT ASSOCIATE PRODUCER AT EA

9. See Above

WEBMASTER FOR DOMINANT SPECIES ONLINE GAMING SITE

8. Shining moment:

When two people actually logged on during the same day

Example of work:

[Chat transcript]

→ anyone out there?

→ yes ... Is this the zoology discussion group?

→ no ... this is a gaming site, do you want to play a game?

→ sure ... is it fun?

→ uh oh ... gotta go

PR GUY FOR DAVE PERRY

7. Shining moment:

Getting media darling Dave Perry into every videogame magazine in creation

Example of work:

[Typical workday schedule]

9:00 AM: Show up to work

9:15 AM: Read Perry Interviews

9:30 AM 5:00 PM Sleep

TODD PORTER

6. "Nuff said. (Okay, so Todd Porter looks nothing like Claudia Schiffer, but our "babe count" was getting low. Complaints?)

AI PROGRAMMER FOR EXTREME PAINTBALL

Shining moment:

5. *Extreme Paintball* actually didn't have any AI. (Really, it shipped with no programmed AI)

Example of work:

[Typical workday schedule]

9:00 AM-5:00 PM: Sleep, soundly

QUALITY CONTROL FOR HEAD GAMES

4. Shining moment:

Letting *Extreme Paintball* get out the front door

Example of work:

None to be found

CUSTOMER SUPPORT FOR SOLITAIRE

3. Shining moment:

Helping Mrs. Eloise Emmrich from Edmond, Idaho, know where to put the nine of clubs

Example of work:

[Transcript of customer service call]

Uh ... did you try putting a red four on the black five?

ION STORM

GOLD MASTER DISC RUNNER

2. Shining moment:

Well, if you consider taking *Dominion* to the disc burner a shining moment ...

Example of his work:

[Typical workday schedule]

9:00 AM: Show up to work

9:15 AM: Ask John Romero if *Dokotono* is ready yet

9:30 AM: Ask Tom Hall if *Anochronox* is ready yet

9:45 AM: Ask Warren Specter if *Deus Ex* is ready yet

10:00 AM-5:00 PM: Tally negative responses and sleep

YOU, THE HARDWARE GAMER

1. Shining moment:

Not buying *Deer Hunter*

Example of work:

Read magazines, buy games, and generally function as the core of the industry. Meanwhile Ferrari-driving marketing execs are ignoring you and spending YOUR money on crappy mass-market games which continually top the sales charts. Face it, the industry now revolves around people who live in trailer homes

PEOPLE WHO JUST MISSED:

→ Executive Bug Checker for *Sierra Sports Football Pro '99*

→ Sid Meier (what's he done?)

→ E-mail security for Ion Storm

→ PC port innovator for Capcom

→ System requirements writer for *Trespasser*

NOW PLAYING



MAJESTY: SOVEREIGN OF ARDANIA

Developer → Cyberlore

Publisher → Cyberlore

Release Date → Fall '99

Product → Cyberlore describes it as a "fantasy kingdom simulation,"

which makes it sound like a cross between *Ultima*

and *C&C*. Your player erects guilds, blacksmith

shops, and temples while

recruiting adventuring heroes for

quests. The game also features the

use of really big words like

"sovereign" and "Ardania."

Dead Celebrity → King Hussein

Kenny: "Your Majesty, what do you

think of Majesty?"

King Hussein: "Ardania is a drifting

island, dislocated in time. Like Aus-

tralia, I imagine."



TACHYON: THE FRINGE

Developer → Novalogic

Publisher → Novalogic

Release Date → Fall '99

Product → What sets this 3D space

combat shoot-em-up apart from the

rest is that it will support up to 120

players at once in an online game

— if you play it through the Nova-

World gaming service. There are

single-player missions,

too, but a full scale online

war sounds like a real

honey, especially since

Wing Commander never

delivered on that promise.

Dead Celebrity → Carl Sagan

Kenny: "Mystic explorer, tell me the

secrets of Tachyon."

Carl: "There are billions and billions

of stars in the universe, each of

which could hold intelligent life. If

Tachyon supports team play, it'll be

a completely cosmic experience."



ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON

Developer → Microprose
Publisher → Hasbro
Release Date → Spring '99
Product → It's the dream of wired coaster fanatics everywhere — a theme park management sim with a focus on building outrageous rollercoasters. Woodies, mine trains, hypercoasters, and even the newest suspended, inverted coasters are possible. Unfortunately, you



can't ride your creations in 3D.

Dead Celebrity → Orville Redenbacher

Kenny "Sweet Spirit, give us the word on Rollercoaster Tycoon."

Orville "The gameplay is sure to be poppin' good fun. Just like my new Orville Redenbacher Movie Theater Butter Popcorn. If that ungrateful grandson of mine won't push the corn, then I'll do it from beyond the grave."



F-22 LIGHTNING 3

Developer → Novologic
Publisher → Novologic
Release Date → May '99
Product → It's a flight sim! No, it's combat! No, it's a flight sim! Well, it's both, and this sequel introduces something new to the mix.



"Voice-Over-Net" technology (creative name, huh?) allows online players to talk to each other during aerial combat. Plus, you

can nuke entire cities... whoo-hoo!
Dead Celebrity → George Burns
Kenny "Sweet Sp..."
George "Hold the sweet talk, sonny. And why are you wearing my old toupee? Anyway, I remember being 22... Inches, that is. That's the real reason Gracie died. Oh, I kill myself. Oops... too late."

The Heat-O-Meter

THE DEATH EDITION

WHAT'S HOT

RATQUEST → Killing rats hasn't been this much fun since ... ummm ... ever. If Linda Tripp is the final boss, we can guarantee Washington servers will be busy for months on end.

E3: ARENA → "Trick or Treat" for industry folks. E3 is just like the treasure-grabbing bonus round of Gountlet except with publicity-hungry PR reps chasing you.

GDC → Some worried the Game Developers Conference would turn into another promotional event. What happened, did Dave Perry's invitation get lost in the mail?

UNREAL ESTATE → *Ultimo Online* players are auctioning their accounts through eBay for hundreds, even thousands, of dollars. Why do buyers think they'll have a good virtual life when they've totally screwed up their real one?

SIM CITY 3000 → This god sim, in which you manage city resources and take complaints from virtual citizens, has been at the top of the sales charts for weeks. It's a good thing you aren't paid for playing it or it would be called "work."

WHAT'S COLD

DAIKATANA DEMO → And the PCXL Award for Best Underachievement in an Overhyped Game goes to ... Ion Storm!

WING COMMANDER (THE MOVIE) → No matter how hard we pressed the spacebar, it wouldn't stop. A film that'll make you yearn for the acting skills of master thespians like Mark Hamill and Ginger Lynn Allen.

EPISODE ONE-THOUSAND → Tickets to the May 15th premiere started at \$500. Hmm ... maybe it should've been advertised on *Ultimo Online*.

I-MAGIC WOES → The game company suffered a net loss of \$11.7 million last year. Ironically, this is the same company that brought us the business sims *Industry Giant* and *Capitalism Plus*. Didn't I-Magic play them?

BLASTO'ED → Sony had bitch-slapped Dave's Classics, the foremost game emulation site on the web, with a lawsuit for copyright infringement and unfair competition. Sony seeks restitution for any damages done — and so do the gamers who accidentally downloaded the ROM for *Blasto*.

PCXL P.I. QUESTIONS THAT JUST NEEDED ANSWERING

You've got questions, we've got issues, and nobody really has any reasonable answers.

ACTIVISION

PCXL: I bought *Sin* and tried to install it but it was too big. I started deleting everything I could to make it fit, but it still wouldn't fit. Finally I uninstalled Windows, but now I can't run anything. All I get is this weird "C:" thing.

Activision: You've done what? Uninstalled Windows? Are you crazy?

PCXL: But it wouldn't fit any other way.

Activision: *Sin* runs in Windows and doesn't work without it.

PCXL: Then how come they won't both fit on my hard drive?

Activision: Well, sounds like you need a bigger hard drive.

PCXL: It didn't say that on the game box. You know it didn't say, "Get a

bigger hard drive to play game" or anything.

Activision: Sorry sir but it does list hard drive space required.

PCXL: I got another question for ya. Isn't it true that Elexis, the evil villainess, masturbates in a bathtub?

Activision: (much laughter from the whole room) I've heard that, but I'm not sure if it's true. I've played through the game a bit but haven't tried any easter egg codes.

PCXL: Don't you think that's cool?

Activision: Yeah, if that's what you like.

ORKIN

PCXL: I have fire beetles and giant rats outside my walls. I go out and kill them and grab their meat to feed in town. I like the experience, but I need to get rid of these rats.

Orkin Man: You do what with the meat?

PCXL: Go into town and sell the meat.

Orkin Man: People buy rat meat? Do they like the way it tastes?

PCXL: I don't know, I just do it for copper pieces. So what can I do?

Orkin Man: You know what sir [in that you are a frickin' nut-pacifying voice] your local Orkin office can best answer this and they aren't open until the morning. It's the same number, but someone different will answer [aka: I don't want to deal with this nutcase].



THE DEAD POOL

Lots of celebrities have died during the past year — as long as PCXL has been around, in fact.

Coincidence? We think not. Let's look at the facts:

SHARI LEWIS



Who: Master puppeteer who made a career out of talking to her hand
Official Cause of Death: Uterine cancer (which isn't funny, really)

Real Cause of Death: Lamb Chop's unrequited love for PCXL senior editor and reported sheep-lover, Dan Egger

RODDY MCDOWALL



Who: British actor who played Cornelius in "Planet Of The Apes"
Official Cause of Death: Cancer

Real Cause of Death: Heartbroken to learn that Rupee (the PCXL spider-monkey intern who later succumbed to rickets) was the role of Cornelius in the remake

ESTHER ROLLE



Who: "Good Times" matriarch who heard "Dy-no-MITE!" more often than any human should

Official Cause of Death: Diabetes
Real Cause of Death: Hector, the PCXL scarecrow, became a constant, and painful, reminder of Jimmy "JJ." Walker

FUP WILSON



Who: Crossdressing comedian who claimed "the devil made me do it!"
Official Cause of Death: Liver cancer

Real Cause of Death: The devil, PCXL's Mac correspondent, made him do it

NORMAN FELL



Who: Played a hilarious homophobe strangely reluctant to have sex with his own wife

Official Cause of Death: Cancer
Real Cause of Death: Cancer — it has been proven that PCXL gives celebrities cancer

GENE SISKEL



Who: Movie critic forever known as "the tall, thin one"
Official Cause of Death: Brain tumor

Real Cause of Death: The balcony closed permanently when Gene contorted his thumb while trying to approximate PCXL's 11 rating of *Half-Life*

STANLEY KUBRICK



Who: Incomprehensible director of such incomprehensible films as 2001: A Space Odyssey
Official Cause of

Death: Heart Attack (not funny either)
Real Cause of Death: PC Games, the incomprehensible PC magazine, died and so did he

JOE DIMAGGIO



Who: Talented baseball player who gained fame for screwing Marilyn Monroe and pushing Mr. Coffee

Official Cause of Death: Lung cancer
Real Cause of Death: Joltin' Joe was joined into the afterlife by the new-found psychokinetic abilities of Ed Lee

DAVID STRICKLAND



Who: Actor on "Suddenly Susan," a comedy about a San Francisco-based magazine ... just like PCXL

Official Cause of Death: Suicide
Real Cause of Death: Working with Kathy Griffin ... we can't take credit for this one

FUTURE PCXL TARGETS
Bob Hope
Katherine Hepburn
Matt LeBlanc

NOW PLAYING



FLY!

Developer → Terminal Reality
Publisher → GDD
Release Date → Summer '99
Product → Fly! is ready to take on Microsoft in this flight sim that incorporates hardcore avionics, aircraft controls, radio and GPS systems, along with five distinct aircraft ranging from the Hawker 800XP to the Cessna 172R Skyhawk.



Dead Celebrity → John Denver
Kenny: "As a pilot, what are your thoughts on Fly!, Sweet Spirit?"
John: "What, is this a joke? Yeah, pick on the guy who crashed his plane into the ocean. I hope you're happy, you sick bastard."



ULTIMATE 8-BALL

Developer → Mirage Technologies
Publisher → THQ
Release Date → June '99
Product → This is the month for sims, huh? It's pool, but not like you've ever seen it before. With 14 different games ranging from 8-Ball (duh) to Cut Throat, 15 AI opponents, 15 unique tables, 0 different environments, plus the ability to perform trick shots, make this the one to watch out for. Hanking to



play against an Elvis impersonator in a biker bar on a glass octagonal table? Now's your chance.
Dead Celebrity →

Kenny: "Sweet Spirit, will Ultimate 8-ball be the ultimate pool game?"
Howard: "If this game flows through on its creativity with solid gameplay then it will be the undisputed champion of the pool world. If not, then it will walk in the agony of defeat."

FREE STUFF WE DON'T WANT

In our constant effort to live a life of luxury well beyond our humble means, we pleaded for free stuff. First we got beer, and we were happy (silly drunk, but happy). Then we got a Diamond Rio, and we were happier



Attention PR types: Beer good, Tampax bad.

than ever (in an illegal-use-of-licensed-music kind of way).

What could be next? A new car? An all-expense paid trip to Vegas? Nope. Tampons. Frickin' tampons. And not even super absorbency tampons. That's right — only six to nine grams of absorbency. What about those "heavy" duds, huh? What possible use could we have for these?

But it gets worse. The following week we received Country.Com's "Century Of Country." This is basically an encyclopedia of information. There isn't even any music on it (not that we wanted any country music in the first place) and only one (fully-clothed) picture of Shania Twain.

THANKS, BUT NO THANKS

Apparently companies are getting the wrong impression about PCXL. Just for the record: We

really don't have any need for tampons, maxi-pads, panty-shields, douche, or any other feminine hygiene products. Nor do we have any interest in country music whatsoever. Play it safe with us. To hell with being original, send us more BEER!





RE-ULT

Developer → Probe

Publisher → Acclaim

Release Date → Fall '99

Product → Guys love radio-controlled cars almost as much as real ones. That's what makes this R/C racing meets Wipeout game such a natural for the PC. Probe has outdone themselves with some of the most vibrant graphics yet seen in a



racing game. Fire weapons, grab power-ups, and crash into other vehicles as you burn rubber to the finish line.

Dead Celebrity → Princess Diana
Kenny: "Sweet Lady princess of the stars, will Re-Volt make it to first place?"

Diana: "Yes, as long as the bloody sod driving the car hasn't drunk two bottles of wine first. By the way, Kenny, both John Denver and I really hate you, you dodgy git."



SINISTAR: UNLEASHED

Developer → GameFX Technology

Publisher → THQ

Release Date → August '99

Product → Sinistar is a 3D space combat remake of the original, keeping the same mine-for-crystals and bomb-the-evil-guy gameplay intact with the added depth of 24 single-player levels and multiplayer support for up to eight players.

Dead Celebrity → Senator Strom



Thurmond
Kenny: "Sweet Spirit, we call on your ethereal knowledge of Sinistar."
Strom: "I'm not dead!"

Kenny: "Close enough. Now, what about Sinistar?"

Strom: "Beware, I feel Run, Kenny
→ RUN, RUN, RUN! BAAARGH!"

Editor's Note: Kenny Kingston mysteriously disappeared while we were writing this piece. Our best wishes to his family and friends.

Suddenly Suicide

THE DEATH OF A STAFFER

Hector Salazar, beloved friend and PCXL scarecrow, was taken from us suddenly. Hector was recently promoted to the rank of Senior Editor, but the pressure to remain edgy, fresh, and entertaining in his expanded duties were too much. Police have ruled his death a suicide by hanging, and, professionally to the end, "funny as hell."

There were warning signs. It's obvious now that throwing himself in front of that moving car was a cry for help, but who knew then? The drugs, the hard living, the hookers ... maybe if he'd had more of them, things would be different now. He never talked about his problems, but that was his way.



At his memorial service, Hector's good friend Mr. Elton John sang a moving rendition of *(Are There) Crows In Heaven*. We believe there are. "Shoo, crow! Shoo!" we imagine him saying (if it were possible for him to speak), making Heaven safe for his fellow staffers when it's our time. Of our friend, we can only say this ... of all the coat racks we have encountered in our travels, he was the most ... human.



HECTOR ULYSSES SALAZAR
1998-1999



Life in the fast lane finally caught up with our beloved Hector.

GAME KILLER

ANOTHER GAME BITES

THE DUST

Last month in Game Killer we showed you how to destroy a particularly bad game using only your microwave oven and 30 seconds of free time. This month we decided to get a little more serious. Our little experiment attracted quite a crowd in the company kitchen, with numerous gaming geeks gathering 'round to watch the action unfold, evoking a Gerald Rivera-esque state of tension. Read on and see what happened ...

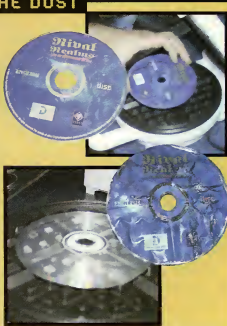
Method #2

A Sunbeam Waffle Iron

THE GAME: The absolutely woeiful *WarCraft II* clone *Rival Realms*

THE FIRST TEST: We put *Rival Realms* into the waffle iron until the "finished" light blinked on. However, the game wasn't finished yet. Besides some minor scarring and definite soginess, the game was not as mangled as we were hoping it would be.

THE SECOND TEST: The CD was dropped back into the waffle iron for another half hour, and kept there, despite intense smoking and a smell which was similar to that of ripe Funland employee. When 30 minutes were up, the *Rival Realms* CD (as well as our waffle iron) was finished and the staff finally vindicated for having to play this awful game.



DEVELOPER SPOTLIGHT

Metabyte Developer Diary

In the past we showed you what it's like to work for a game developer: The long hours, the hard work, the commitment. But on the hardware side, things are just as challenging. Take a look at Metabyte, maker of the Wicked 3D line of video accelerators. If you evaluate the company based only on size and market share, it doesn't seem all that impressive. Compared to larger companies like Diamond Multimedia, STB, and Creative Labs, Metabyte looks positively tiny, but thanks to recent innovations, the company has proved that size doesn't always matter.

Metabyte is comprised of more than 100 employees, but the Wicked 3D division has only 12 engineers and designers. Since

1993, this small, but dedicated group of creative types has focused on pushing the boundaries of chipsets. At first the innovations were focused on better drivers to make Wicked 3D cards sell faster, but before long, the company started to branch out with more ambitious ideas.

This direction led to new creations like the Wicked EyeScream glasses (which debuted as the best and most supported mass market 3D goggles on the market), and clever software that let players run competing Voodoo 2 cards using higher resolutions. But even these cool products did not have nearly the impact that the company's next big creation would: The Wicked Stepstister.

While the big boys were struggling just to keep up with the ever-



Nothing better than a Developer Diary and the Swedish Bikini Team. Wait a second... these girls don't have bikinis!

changing 3D chipset market, Metabyte shocked everyone by creating the Stepstister system. This enables gamers to connect two like 3D cards (on boards like the TNT, TNT2 and just about any other chipset) for frame rates beyond anyone's expectations. By enabling gamers to buy one card and then upgrade it with another later on down the line, the Stepstister system brought back the thrill of SLI, which helped make the Voodoo 2 of the most popular add-ins in the business.

So how did this small company leapfrog the competition and change the speed limit for 3D gaming? It took constant forward movement and a crew of engineers that know and love games. One of the key qualifications to join the ranks of the Metabyte engineering team is the love of gaming. The results have been innovations that actually improve gameplay. For instance, Metabyte is currently developing a sur-

round-style video system. This uses three monitors and three video cards to display games all around the player. Combine this with the EyeScream glasses and you have a thoroughly immersive gaming experience. We tried it with Quake and couldn't believe how different it felt to be able to see with your entire range of vision. It's a system that would be too expensive for the mass market, but one that was obviously designed by guys who love games. (Our kind of people.)

Dave Cook, the group's lead engineer, and his troops may seem a bit more straight-laced than the typical software development crew (they are engineers after all), but their creations are just as imaginative. Who'd ever think engineering could be so damn cool?

STATUS

NUMBER OF ENGINEERS WHO OCCASIONALLY WEAR FULL VIKING ATTIRE: 1

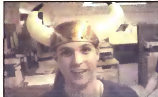
NUMBER OF ENGINEERS WITH NIPPLE RINGS: 1

PERCENTAGE OF STAFF WHO CAN QUOTE PULP FICTION WORD FOR WORD: 100 percent

PERCENTAGE OF STAFF WHO DEMONSTRATED SOME FORM OF PUBLIC NUDITY IN LAST TWO YEARS: 25 percent

NUMBER OF STAFFERS WHO SENT US A DISTURBING CARTOON ABOUT SPERM DONATION: 1

NUMBER OF STAFFERS WHO ARE ENVELOPE-PUSHING WEBMISTRESSES: 1 (coincidence?)



While all these people occasionally dress up in full Viking attire, none of them actually work for Metabyte or Wicked 3D.

If you look very closely you will see Metabyte's offices.

FEEDBACK

→ This month we got some very alarming letters. Many of them implied that we are obsessed with beer and breasts. We cannot imagine what has lead you, our faithful readers, to this conclusion. Please write in and let us know how we are doing in other areas, too. Email bigjugs@pcxl.com

PCXL GOES TO COLLEGE...

I'm a loyal reading fan of PCXL and I was sitting in my college library reading your mag (which my college subs to) and I turned it to the page with Elexis and the "Self-gratification" part, and the head librarian saw it, and asked what I was reading. I told him "PCXL" and he was like, "Let me see that," so he took the magazine into his office and never returned. I came back and asked one of the librarians what happened and she said PCXL was BANNED from my school and that it persuaded youth to look at porn and drink beer.

MICHAEL CRUMP

We've been banned from a college! Woohoo! While a few staff members have been banned from campuses, this is a first for our magazine. Thanks for your support!

About two weeks ago, the night before my Chemistry final I stopped at a local newsstand and picked up your magazine with the intent of reading on the hour long train ride home ... I did read it on that ride home, as well as after I got home, as well as into the night. All the way up to when I discovered pcxl.com's Babe-orama webpage.

I failed that damn Chem final, but you can bet your ass you're in my bookmarks now!

Justin Reiche

That's okay, we all failed Chemistry too.

GIRLS IN SKIMPY OUTFITS

Hey, your magazine is pretty cool ... but maybe you could put some stuff for the girls in it ... you know, girls don't like to see other girls in skimpy outfits ... well most girls don't want to see other girls

in skimpy outfits. Or maybe make a magazine for the girls, "the magazine for girls who love games."

-Hexa

We wish to reach everyone, so how about a compromise? From now on we will be "The Magazine for Girls Who Love Games ... While Wearing Skimpy Outfits"

ROSY PALMS

Hello, I have a comment about April 99's "mood cover." Every time I try to rub it hard enough, my finger starts to burn and the paper on the cover rips. I have gone and bought several other of the same magazines only to find out the same thing. Are all the magazine covers defective? Why does this happen to me? Am I doing it wrong? Please tell me if that was a misprint in that issue.

Nathan Klose

Perhaps Mr. Webster can help you:

Humor 'Hu'mor', n. [OE. humor, OF. humor, umor.] That quality of the imagination which gives to ideas an incongruous or fantastic turn, and tends to excite laughter or mirth by ludicrous images or representations; a playful fancy; facetiousness.

(It's either that or your mood doesn't change often.)

Dear PCXL,

How dare you people spread your filth to a group of young impressionable gamers. Wait a minute ... my wife left the room. Keep up the excellent work.

From Monkey AssNoise

Thanks for the support, and we promise not to tell Mrs. AssNoise.

GIA SCORES

Ever since Gia DiCarlo started working on our magazine, her mailbox has been swamped with love letters, passionate pleas for attention, and missives from the just plain weird. Gia collected the best of the letters and graded the pickup lines from one to ten.

You are very beautiful and remember this: Keep your stungun's charge at the highest and make sure you have a new and full max dispenser. Anything that will put normal men down will be ineffective against the guys on staff.

Sammy(Godly)Busby

Good advice is always sexy — 7

You are perfect for my new Magazine. Ditch the losers. PCXL isn't anything to mine. You can be heard in charge, after me of course. You'll get anything you want baby. And if I like you enough, you may be able to be on top.

I'll talk to you later baby, DeBeau

Classy, really classy — 2

I saw into your picture and I had to look you up. Your Viking smile captivated me. Today I'm on my way to Spain to close on some business deals. I am European/Hispanic my father is from Spain and we have some property there. Therefore, I travel a lot. This doesn't allow me to date much. I hope you receive this message in due time I'd like to know you better and maybe meet

some day. I have attached a picture of myself at my place of leisure. I have 4 horses and love to ride into the fiery-red sunsets.

I've seen the pictures, those aren't horses! — 3

Hello, do you have ICQ? If so msg me please.

My nickname is Zero.Cool

Has a nickname ever been so appropriate? — 0

I am amazed at how well they put PCXL together. Not to mention the devastatingly gorgeous women they hire. OH DID I SAY THAT ... I'm sorry ... you have to be the most devastatingly gorgeous woman I have ever laid eyes on ... to receive a response from would just be totally phat ...

Chris

Never call a girl "Phat" — 3

MS.DECARLO:

My name is Michael Morgan and I am a photographer looking for a model for a very large project. Please email me if you are interested in finding out the details. It is a paying job with all travel expenses covered by magazine.

Flattery will get you everywhere, but, what exactly is this mag? — 7

Why don't you send me some nude pictures of you, and I will send you some of me, I'm sure we can get along, if you know what I mean!

MasterMind

Of course I know what you mean and I just don't think I want to see the pictures. — 1

Can you scan me a picture of you in sexy stockings, or if you can't scan, send them to Craig Oley [address deleted]

The police have already been sent to [address deleted] — 1



Getting Mike's pencil off the floor, again. It never gets old.



These sponsors make it possible for PC ACCELERATOR to exist. Without them we'd just be a bunch of loud-mouthed fools. We appreciate their advertising, but if they make a game that sucks, we WILL kill it. Nobody owns PCOL, but PCOL.

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MECHWARRIOR 2 / SIDEWINDER 3D PRO UPDATE

For all persons who

- (1) purchased a bundle containing Activision's MechWarrior 2 game (MS-DOS version) and Microsoft's SideWinder 3D Pro joystick, or
- (2) purchased a bundle containing MechWarrior 2 Windows 95 version 1.0 and the SideWinder 3D Pro and have experienced two twist or throttle limitations when using the SideWinder 3D Pro with MechWarrior 2.

Activision and Microsoft are offering a free CD containing the MechWarrior 2 Windows 95* version 1.1. To obtain your free CD, please send your name, address, daytime phone number and proof of purchase (your original receipt, the original bar code from the box or the original MechWarrior 2 Registration (SideWinder 3D Pro Edition) card that came in the box) to:

Fulfillment • P.O. Box 1096 • Buffalo, NY 14240-1096

You may clip out and mail the form below. You will be reimbursed for first-class postage for mailing your request and proof of purchase.

A few purchasers of the bundle containing the SideWinder 3D Pro and the MechWarrior 2 MS-DOS version later took advantage of an offer to swap their MS-DOS version for a Windows 95 version (1.1) of the MechWarrior 2 at a cost of \$14.95. If you took advantage of this offer, your \$14.95 will be refunded, plus postage. Use the form below to request a refund. Clip it out and mail to the address above along with your original receipt or a copy of your cancelled check for the swap offer in the amount of \$14.95, accompanied by proof that you purchased the bundle (your original receipt for the bundle, the original bar code from the box or your original MechWarrior 2 Registration (SideWinder 3D Pro Edition) card that came in your box).

This offer is valid through August 31, 1999. Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery. Offer good only in the United States and Canada.

*Please note that the CD available through this offer contains a Windows 95 version of MechWarrior 2 game that has substantially different system requirements than the MS-DOS version bundled with the SideWinder 3D Pro.

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Name: _____
Address: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
State/Province: _____ Zip/Postal Code: _____

Daytime Phone (____) _____ (in case we have questions about your order)

☐ I bought a bundle containing the MS-DOS version of MechWarrior 2 and the SideWinder 3D Pro, and later paid \$14.95 to swap my MS-DOS version of MechWarrior 2 for a Windows 95 version (1.1). I am enclosing my original receipt or a copy of my cancelled check for the swap offer in the amount of \$14.95. Please send me a refund for \$14.95 plus postage. If you check this box, the card and your original receipt or a copy of your cancelled check for the swap offer in the amount of \$14.95 is no receipt in the address above along with proof that you purchased the bundle (your original receipt for the bundle, the original bar code from your box or your original MechWarrior 2 Registration (SideWinder 3D Pro Edition) card that came in your box).

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Everquest sucks!

Before I begin berating this game I feel it necessary to state a few key facts. I have never played *Everquest*. I've also never jumped off the Golden Gate bridge or severed my left hand, but I still know that they both suck. The reason I haven't played *Everquest* is because it is NOT a game, it is a disease. The sickness is currently infecting and sissifying my once manly team of editors.

Rob Smith, or "Galgorth" as he is known in the land of the sissies, used to run rampant through *Quake II* servers driving rockets through everyone's foreheads. Last seen, our formerly fearless editor was fleeing from a frickin' rat.

Even the once mighty **PCXL** Olympic champion Ed Lee (sissified name: Rheek) has succumbed to *Rat Hunter 3D*. As I write this, Dan Egger and Chuck Osborn are both beginning to turn to the dark side. Unless I can stop this madness we'll be forced to rename the magazine, *PC Everquest* — The magazine for sissies with no lives.

So why do I hate this game, when everyone else seems to love it? Quite simply, it just plain sucks. Why in the hell would you create a game where you could have over 1000 people online and no killing of

**Rob: Look at those effects.
Mike: Look at those geeks.**

other people — it's just wrong I tell ya. *Everquest* is nothing more than a poorly designed single-player game of rat killing, with the lag and downed servers of an online game. Where is the multiplayer? Oh, you can make friends and cooperatively kill various rodents, but then you have to share experience points. From what I've seen of *Everquest*, it involves sleeping, fleeing, worrying, and dying — not exactly your staples of good gameplay, eh?

The 3D graphics are nice, but completely useless. Who really wants to see polygonal rats, bats, fire beetles, and snakes staring at you as you attempt to slay them? The main portion of this game is battling vermin with your sword/weapon, yet the interaction is laughable. Never once does your sword actually make contact with the beast (and I use that term lightly) you are attacking. Wouldn't that be the very first thing you'd work on?

I'm not saying you won't like *Everquest*, in fact you'll probably spend so much time playing the game that your girlfriend will leave you. What I'm saying is why waste your time, when there are so many other games that are just plain better?

(Please note: All information in the second opinion box is wrong — just thought you should know)

— MIKE "YOU CAN KEEP YOUR SISSY MEDIEVAL

SECOND PERSON

That first sentence sums up the pointlessness of this argument. "I have never played *Everquest*." Everything you say after that is, therefore, rubbish. Without playing you can't understand what a refreshing option it is to adventure in an online world and not be threatened by Player Killers ruining the experience. Neither do you understand the learning curve of understanding how powerful (or not) you are, and how you progress from mass rat slaying to bigger and better things.

Sure the combat is turn-based (based on your characters' offense and weapon skill) but that's much fairer for an online game to ensure lpb's aren't wailing on 28.8 modem users. And the monster models are excellent and wouldn't look out of place in *Unreal* — the current high-spot of graphical excellence.

Let's face it, Mike, you're just jealous that you aren't in with the "in" crowd and by the time you finally succumb to *Everquest*'s charms we'll all be able to kick your ass, and you'll be killing rodents. Give it a try — your girlfriend will forgive you.

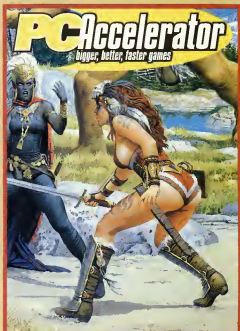
By the way, Mike, you're an ignorant slut.

— ROB "PROUD THAT GALGORTH HAS REACHED 7TH LEVEL (ON INNORUUK)" SMITH

NEXT MONTH?

Everquest

As you might have noticed, *Everquest* has much of the formerly rugged **PCXL** staff (see column at left) squealing in delight. The high-pitched screams have recently been heard echoing through the offices (and Gia wasn't around) late into the evenings, as we prepare to bring you even more *Everquest* strategy, or as the manlier staffers call it, "Advanced Rat Killing."



Aliens vs. Predator

You've seen the movies, stared at our stunning cover, and read the hype ... bring on the damn game, already! By the time the July **PCXL** hits the stands, you can bet our editorial crack- and smack-heads will have logged in many an hour on AvP, and we'll let you know the real story before you shell out your hard-earned bucks.

The Ten Best Games You've Never Heard Of

We'd tell you what they are right now, but you've never heard of them. That's the whole point. We know they're out there and we'll let you in on their secrets.

More Celebrity Death

The most tragic celebrity death of them all, Pamela Lee's breasts. A loving tribute to the two very things upon which this mag was founded — right and left.





"...looks to set a whole new standard in the genre."

PC Gamer, November '98



"Flying and dealing death from (the dragon's) back is an undeniable blast."

Computer Games Online, March '99



"(Rynn) looks like she could kick Lara Croft's ass."

Computer Gaming World, April '99

Surreal
software



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